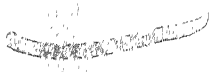


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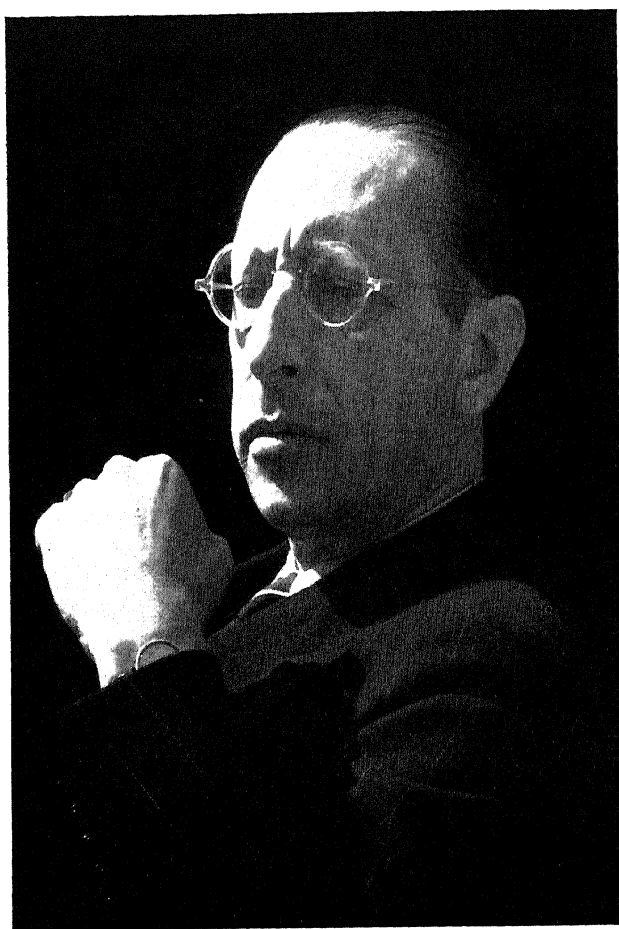
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STRAVINSKY



IGOR STRAVINSKY (1935)

Edward Weston

Eric Walter White

STRAVINSKY

A Critical Survey



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New York

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To
MY WIFE

PREFACE

IN THE years immediately preceding the first World War, Igor Stravinsky became the stormy petrel of the musical world through the originality and audacity of the scores he wrote for Diaghilev's Russian Ballet. The controversies that raged round his name were in no way diminished by the deliberate change in direction shown by the music he wrote when living in France during the period between the two Wars. More recently he has taken up residence in the United States and become an American citizen; and his strong feeling for classical discipline, tradition and clarity has been confirmed in his Harvard lectures as well as his latest compositions. The purpose of this book is to survey and comment on the evolution of his work so as to help readers and listeners to appreciate the issues involved and to increase their enjoyment of his music.

In the matter of spelling Russian names, I have been partly guided by Bela Bartok's article, *Some Linguistic Observations* (published in *Tempo*, March 1946), though I have not always slavishly followed his transliteration formula, feeling that the peculiar genius of the English language does not take altogether kindly to any preconceived system of spelling, however logical.

The titles of Stravinsky's compositions have generally been given in English, for I consider that to persist unnecessarily in referring to a work by a foreign title—even though French remains the *lingua franca* of the ballet world—diminishes its general accessibility and appeal, particularly to that wider audience for music whose interest may have been roused by comparatively recent developments such as broadcasting, the sound film, and the more democratic provision of live concerts throughout this country.

And here I gladly acknowledge the debt I owe to the various sources from which I have drawn a considerable part of my information. A list of the standard works by and about Stravinsky will be found in Appendix C. Thanks for permission to quote from copyright material are due to:

Igor Stravinsky and Victor Gollancz Ltd. (*Chronicle of my Life*)
Igor Stravinsky and the Harvard University Press (*Poétique Musicale*)

PREFACE

Alexandre Benois and Putman & Co. Ltd. (*Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet*)

Methuen & Co. Ltd. (*The Sacred Wood* by T. S. Eliot)

Serge Lifar and Putnam & Co. Ltd. (*Diaghilev*)

Romola Nijinsky and Victor Gollancz Ltd. (*Nijinsky*)

Horizon (*Memoirs of the late Princesse Edmond de Polignac*)

and also to Jean Cocteau, André Gide, C. F. Ramuz, Siegfried Sassoon and the late H. G. Wells. To Mr. T. G. Fenton I am indebted for assistance in compiling the list of gramophone records in Appendix B.

Finally, I wish to mention the help I have received, sometimes by the loan of material, and sometimes by way of advice and encouragement, from:

Ernest Ansermet

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Marie Rambert

Kurt Sluzewski

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Steuart Wilson.

E.W.W.

London, December 1946

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CHAPTER I
THE APPRENTICE YEARS
(RUSSIA, 1882-1910)

1

Early Friendships and Studies

IGOR FEODOROVICH STRAVINSKY was born on June 5 (old style), 1882, or June 18 according to the modern calendar. His parents inhabited St. Petersburg; but it was their custom to spend part of each summer at Oranienbaum on the Gulf of Finland just opposite the fortress of Cronstadt, and their third son was born there on the feast of St. Igor and christened Igor accordingly. His mother was Little Russian, and on both sides he was descended from landed gentry.

Music played an important part in his life as a boy. At the age of nine he was given a piano mistress and quickly learned to read music—particularly the opera scores he found in the family library, for his father Feodor was one of the most celebrated bass-baritones of his day, and his roles included Mephistopheles in both Gounod's and Boito's *Faust*, Farlaf in Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* and Varlaam in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. In this way the young Stravinsky became familiar with many Russian operas—particularly Glinka's *Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Ludmilla*—before he actually heard them at the Imperial Opera House. At the same time he discovered a taste for improvisation, which probably helped to confirm his understanding of the piano and may have sowed the seeds of musical ideas that were to ripen later.

That he needed a strong interest of this kind appears clearly from the fact that he was lonely as a boy. He hated school—where he seems to have been an indifferent pupil—and had no friends of his own age; he was afraid even to open his heart to his youngest brother Gury, of whom he was very fond, lest his aspirations should be misunderstood and his self-esteem wounded. Emancipation came gradually as he grew older. To begin with, he found an atmosphere of sympathy and encouragement in the house of his mother's brother-in-law, Yelachich, where he met a group of liberal-minded people who professed advanced opinions on social problems, politics and art. Although their taste in music led them to admire realism and

naturalism—and this seems to have embraced everything from folklore to Mussorgsky—they also showed a genuine appreciation of symphonic music, which was not confined to the lyrical symphonies of Chaikovsky, the epic symphonies of Borodin, the academic symphonies of Glazunov or the symphonic poems of Rimsky-Korsakov, but included the works of German composers like Brahms and Bruckner. A few years later, a close friendship sprang up between Stravinsky and a young man called Ivan Pokrovsky, who introduced him to the works of French composers—in particular, Gounod, Bizet, Delibes and Chabrier.

In due course, Stravinsky's parents decided that as soon as he had matriculated he should study law at the University of St. Petersburg; and although he had made considerable progress under his second piano mistress, a pupil of Anton Rubinstein, his predilection for music was regarded as a side-line—to be encouraged up to a point, but not to be taken too seriously. Nevertheless, it was agreed that he should have a harmony teacher; but the results of this step were somewhat disappointing. It is always possible that the teacher was incompetent or used an unsuitable method of instruction; but it seems more likely that Stravinsky's failure to profit from this special tuition was to be explained by his innate wish to solve musical problems by his own efforts rather than by the use of established rules of procedure. On the other hand, he was much attracted by counterpoint and from the age of eighteen began to study it alone, with no other help than an ordinary manual. These self-imposed exercises opened up a wider vista in the domain of musical composition and did more than anything else at this period of his life to stimulate his imagination and desire to compose, and to lay the foundations of his future technique.

The leading musical figures in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century were Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. These with their followers, Liadov and Cherepnin, formed a group which, though officially looked on as the legitimate descendants of the 'Kuchka' or the Five (Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov himself), really developed a fresh school with an established esthetic doctrine of their own and gradually took possession of the key posts in the St. Petersburg Conservatoire. On the threshold of his University career, Stravinsky was a fervent admirer of both Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. In his *Chronicle* he has related how he was 'specially drawn to the former by his melodic and harmonic inspiration; to the latter by his feeling for symphonic form; and to both by their scholarly workmanship': so it was hardly

surprising that he should seek to imitate them in his early compositions. Moreover, at the University he had the good fortune to meet Rimsky-Korsakov's youngest son, Vladimir, who was also a student there; and it was not long before an opportunity arose of meeting the composer himself.

During the summer vacation of 1902, Stravinsky visited Bad Wildungen with his mother and father, who had fallen seriously ill; at the same time the Rimsky-Korsakov family was staying at Heidelberg where another son was studying at the University. Stravinsky seized the opportunity to rush over to Heidelberg to see his fellow-student and also to consult Vladimir's father about his vocation. What happened at this interview had such a decisive effect on his future life that it must be told in his own words:

'I told Rimsky-Korsakov of my ambition to become a composer and asked his advice. He made me play some of my first attempts. Alas! the way he received them was far different from what I had hoped. Seeing how upset I was, and evidently anxious not to discourage me, he asked if I could play anything else. I did so, of course; and it was only then that he gave his opinion. He told me that before anything else I must continue my studies in harmony and counterpoint with one or other of his pupils in order to acquire complete mastery in the schooling of craftsmanship, but at the same time he strongly advised me not to enter the Conservatoire. He considered that the atmosphere of that institution, in which he was himself a professor, was not suitable for me, for I should be overwhelmed with work, as I had to go on with my University course as well. Moreover, as I was twenty, he feared I might find myself backward in comparison with my contemporaries, and that might discourage me. He further thought it necessary that my work should be systematically supervised, and that that could only be achieved by private lessons. In conclusion, he said that I could always go to him for advice, and that he was quite willing to take me in hand when I had acquired the necessary foundation. Although in my ingenuousness I was somewhat downcast over the lack of enthusiasm the master had shown for my first efforts at composition, I found some comfort in the fact that he had nevertheless advised me to continue my studies and so demonstrated his opinion that I had sufficient ability to devote myself to a musical career. This comforted me all the more since everyone knew the rigour and frankness of his judgment when his verdict as to the musical vocation of a beginner was required: he fully realised the personal responsibility attaching to his great authority.'

For the moment, however, various circumstances prevented Stravinsky from working regularly at composition. In the first place, his father died in November 1902. Then, his increasingly close association with the Rimsky-Korsakov household widened the circle of his acquaintances, and this brought fresh interests in its train. Among his new friends—mainly painters, scholars, scientists and amateurs with advanced views—was a young writer, Stepan Stepanovich Mitusov, who had an instinctive love of music. Together they read the works of Hoffmann, Maeterlinck and Oscar Wilde; and later it was to be Mitusov who collaborated with Stravinsky in writing the libretto for *The Nightingale*.

This was a period of intense activity in the artistic life of the Russian capital. A few years previously Serge Diaghilev had begun to publish his review *Mir Iskustva* ('The World of Art') and to organise exhibitions of contemporary Russian art. A little later, a group of Stravinsky's friends—Pokrovsky, Nouvel and Nourok—realising that the cause of modern music was inadequately served by the Imperial Musical Society and the Belaiev Symphony Concerts, founded the *Soirées of Contemporary Music*, where chamber music, particularly by French composers like César Franck, Vincent d'Indy, Fauré, Dukas, Chabrier and Debussy, was performed. In this atmosphere of artistic ferment, Stravinsky found himself especially attracted by the novelty of Debussy's musical idiom, his extraordinary freedom, freshness of technique and feeling for form and order; but he was careful not to allow his sympathy with these new trends in art to deflect him from his avowed purpose of obtaining a secure foothold in his profession. He realised that the only way to accomplish this was to submit to the discipline of his masters and, by implication, to their esthetic outlook. Although the majority of the Conservatoire professors were conservative and reactionary in their tendencies, Rimsky-Korsakov and Liadov were too broad-minded to make a sweeping indictment and condemnation of everything serious and significant that modern music had to offer; and Stravinsky relates that, after a concert where one of Debussy's works had been performed, he asked Rimsky-Korsakov what he thought of it and received the reply: 'Better not listen—one runs the risk of getting accustomed to his music, and one would end by liking it!'

Of the moral issues involved in submitting to the discipline of his masters and accepting—at least temporarily—their esthetic standpoint, Stravinsky has written at some length in his *Chronicle*. There he fortifies his apology by contending that 'every doctrine of esthetics, when put into practice, demands a particular mode of

expression—in fact, a technique of its own; for, in art, such a thing as a technique founded on no given basis—in short, a technique in the air—would be utterly inconceivable. . . . I cannot, therefore, reproach my teachers for having clung to their own esthetics—they could not have done otherwise; and, as a matter of fact, it was no hindrance to me. Indeed, the technical knowledge that I acquired, thanks to them, gave me a solid foundation of incalculable value, on which I was later able to establish and develop my own craftsmanship. No matter what the subject may be, there is only one course for the beginner: he must at first accept a discipline from without, but only as the means of obtaining freedom for, and strengthening himself in, his personal method of expression.’

This is undoubtedly a legitimate attitude to adopt; and Stravinsky adhered to it conscientiously during the years of his apprenticeship. But once *The Fire Bird* (1910) was written and he realised the full measure of his artistic capabilities, it will be seen that he turned his back on the doctrines of the Russian nationalistic school and, in accordance with the traditional cultural affiliation of St. Petersburg with Western Europe, began to look increasingly to Italy and France for artistic stimulus and inspiration.

2

Juvenile Works

The first work of Stravinsky's of which there is record was a full-sized Piano Sonata, written when he was twenty-one about the time of a visit to Samara (later Kuibishev) and the country of the Tartars, and dedicated to his friend, Nicholas Richter. Its composition caused him so much trouble and anxiety that he decided to ask Rimsky-Korsakov for advice. Accordingly, he visited him in the country at the end of the summer of 1903, staying with him for about a fortnight; and this marked the beginning of their close association as teacher and pupil which continued for about three years. On this occasion, Rimsky-Korsakov set his new pupil to compose the first part of a sonatina under his supervision and also began to teach him the elements of orchestration. These lessons were continued in the autumn. As a first step, Stravinsky was set to work on certain sections of the piano score of Rimsky-Korsakov's latest opera, *Pan Voyevoda*. When his version was completed, Rimsky-Korsakov would show him his own instrumentation of the same passage and ask him to explain the differences. If the pupil was unable to do so, the

composer explained them himself. Later Stravinsky was given pieces of classical music to orchestrate, including parts of Beethoven's piano sonatas and of Schubert's quartets and marches. In this way, practice in instrumentation marched hand in hand with analysis of form.

In the spring of 1905 Stravinsky completed his University studies; in the autumn he became engaged to one of his cousins, Catherine Gabrielle, and on January 11, 1906, they were married, his master acting as best man according to the Russian custom. Thenceforward he divided his time between St. Petersburg and Ustilug, which is situated at the confluence of the rivers Lug and Bug in Volhynia. There he built himself a house on an estate belonging to his wife and sister-in-law and composed the greater part of his music during the next six years. He still saw Rimsky-Korsakov regularly, however, and made a point of submitting each new work to him in draft for criticism and advice.

Indeed, his first numbered opus, the Symphony in E flat (1905-7), is dedicated to Rimsky-Korsakov who supervised its composition closely from start to finish. It was undertaken mainly as an exercise in form; and its regulation four movements adhere closely to the traditional lines of Glazunov's symphonies. Other influences are discernible—particularly Chaikovsky, Wagner and Rimsky-Korsakov himself; but this does not alter the fact that the musical material is dull and developed for the most part in an academic and unimaginative way. The Scherzo is the most attractive of the movements—in later years it was occasionally played as an interlude at performances of the Russian Ballet—and there is an episode in the finale that deserves attention. Almost exactly half way through that movement, Stravinsky quotes a tune (*Caw, Caw, Jackdaw!*) which was to reappear later in the third of the Three Little Songs (memories of his childhood) written in 1913. This was probably one of the themes he had used as a basis for improvisation in earlier years; and in the song it accompanies words that poke fun at an old usher who used to force pupils to attend certain concerts as part of the school curriculum. Its quotation in the Symphony would appear to be almost a private joke.

The Symphony was followed by a suite for mezzo-soprano and orchestra, *Faun and Shepherdess*, based on three poems of Pushkin in the manner of Parny. This he dedicated to his wife. The music is not very distinguished; but it is interesting to notice the influence of Debussy at the opening of the second song, *Faun*, and the last bars of the third song clearly foreshadow the coda to the Finale of *The Fire Bird*. A private performance of both the Symphony and the song cycle by the Court Orchestra was arranged by Rimsky-Korsakov in the spring of 1907; and a few months later *Faun and*

Shepherdess was given in public at one of the Belaiev concerts. Since then, the Symphony has been heard in a revised version, notably when conducted by Ansermet at Montreux (April 2, 1914) and by Stravinsky himself in Paris (November 16, 1928).

In the winter of 1907-8 two songs were written for mezzo-soprano and piano to words by a young Russian poet: *Spring (The Cloister)* and *A Song of the Dew*. Stravinsky has spoken of Gorodetsky, their author, as 'one of a group of writers who, by their talent and their freshness, were destined to put new life into our somewhat old-fashioned poetry'—a claim that can hardly be substantiated by the poems in question. Their most distinctive quality, so far as it can be perceived through a possibly inadequate translation, seems to be a faded sentimentality. *Spring* (dedicated to Petresco) is the lament of a love-lorn bell-ringer's daughter on the point of entering a cloister. *A Song of the Dew* (dedicated to Gorodetsky himself) is subtitled 'Mystic Song of the Ancient Order of Russian Flagellants'. These appear in the poem as a group of virgins collecting dew in the early morning—apparently to improve their chances of marriage. Stravinsky's settings are tentative and fumbling. Each song contains passages of *quasi recitativo*, which fit uncomfortably into the lyrical scheme. *A Song of the Dew* is particularly disjointed; but *Spring* is more formal in its layout and has occasional passages of interest (such as the carillon figure in the accompaniment) which foreshadow later technical developments.

Later in 1908 he composed a song without words called *Pastoral*, which he dedicated to Nadia Rimsky-Korsakov. Here the absence of words seems to have proved stimulating. Quiet, cool, unhurried, the two melodic lines—one in the voice and the other in the piano accompaniment—go their different ways, perfectly poised over a drone bass. The work is short and succinct. For the first time Stravinsky seems to have accomplished successfully what he set out to do; and the result is a charming miniature. It is worth while noting that *Pastoral* is one of the few apprentice works that was accepted in later years as coming within the canon, for in 1923 he expanded it slightly and instrumented it for voice, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet and bassoon, and ten years later adapted the voice part for violin.

Both *Pastoral* and the two Gorodetsky songs were performed at the Soirées of Contemporary Music in the winter of 1908.

Meanwhile, he had been engaged on a more important work, a movement for full orchestra (excluding trombones and tuba) entitled *Fantastic Scherzo*.¹ This was dedicated to Siloti, at whose series of

¹ He was already corresponding with Rimsky-Korsakov about this project in June-July, 1907.

concerts it was first performed. The initial inspiration, as can be seen from the following note prefixed to the score, came from Maeterlinck: 'This piece is inspired by an episode in the life of the bees. The first section gives an impression of life and activity in the hive. The central section, a slow movement, depicts sunrise and the nuptial flight of the queen bee, the love fight with her chosen mate, and his death. The third section, a reprise of the first, shows the peaceful activity of the hive continuing. Thus the whole piece becomes for us human beings the fantastic picture of an eternal cycle.' This note, with its slightly portentous conclusion, is of special interest because it shows that, although here writing a concert piece, Stravinsky had laid down for himself a programme which is at only one remove from a definite stage action. In fact, the *Fantastic Scherzo* was actually performed as a *ballet blanc* under the title, *The Bees*, at the Paris Opera House on January 10, 1917; but at that time Stravinsky was ill at Morges, and it is believed that he was not in any way connected with the production.

The music, as might be expected from the subject, is full of a busy, buzzing chromaticism. It is clear that about this time Stravinsky must have been considerably influenced by Dukas's *Sorcerer's Apprentice*; there are also obvious traces of Wagner's *Mastersingers* in the slow section¹ and an occasional touch of Debussy;² but the work's main virtue resides in its verve and impulse. However derivative the music may be and illustrative in a sense that the later Stravinsky would have been the first to denounce, at least it moves.

For the next of his major works, Stravinsky's thoughts turned definitely to the theatre, and he began to plan an opera—not a musical drama, but a lyrical tale with music. Rimsky-Korsakov had just finished *The Golden Cockerel* (1907); and in view of his master's operatic record, it is not surprising that Stravinsky should have looked for a supernatural subject. He found a suitable one, not in the Slavonic myths that had provided material for so many Russian operas and ballets, but in Hans Andersen's charming fairy tale, *The Nightingale*. The libretto was written by his friend Mitusov; but from the beginning the composer was mindful of the warning prefixed by Rimsky-Korsakov to *The Golden Cockerel* score that 'an opera is above all a musical work', and he supervised its planning carefully from the musical point of view. The action was divided into three acts—Act I, the edge of a forest by the seashore; Act II, the Emperor of China's porcelain palace; Act III, a hall in the palace containing the Emperor's bedchamber—and the whole was to be

¹ Sections 37–9.

² For instance, sections 45 and 46.

framed by the fisherman's song which is heard at the beginning and end of Act I and offstage at the end of each of the succeeding acts.

The original tale is so well known that it is unnecessary to summarise it here; but it is interesting to see how a number of Andersen's more fantastic touches were ingeniously incorporated in the libretto, such as the pompous priest's invariable answer of *Tsing-Pe!* to any question, and the episode where the ladies of the court try to imitate the nightingale by gargling with water. The following passage was taken as cue for a choral entr'acte at the beginning of Act II: 'The palace was festively adorned. The walls and the flooring, which were of porcelain, gleamed in the rays of thousands of golden lamps. The most glorious flowers, which could ring clearly, had been placed in the passages. There was a running to and fro and a thorough draught.' But it is curious that Stravinsky should have made no use in his score of Andersen's statement that the artificial nightingale 'sang waltzes' and that immediately after its arrival the Emperor insisted on the two birds singing a duet together.

Work on the first act of *The Nightingale* was started in 1908; and Stravinsky's statement that he 'remembers with pleasure Rimsky-Korsakov's approval of the preliminary sketches' is particularly interesting in view of the obvious way the introduction, with its slowly oscillating fifths and thirds, recalls the opening of Debussy's *Nuages*. (In *Music Ho!* Constant Lambert makes the ingenious suggestion that a common origin for this figure may be found in one of the songs in Mussorgsky's *Without Sunlight* cycle.) But the happy relationship between master and pupil, which had gradually merged into mutual friendship, was now to be broken.

Before leaving St. Petersburg for Ustilug in the spring of 1908, Stravinsky called with his wife to say goodbye to Rimsky-Korsakov and told him of his intention to write a short orchestral fantasy, *Fireworks*, to commemorate the marriage of his daughter, Nadia, to Maximilian Steinberg. The composition was finished in six weeks and dedicated to the bridegroom. Though lasting no more than four and a half minutes, it was by far his most successful and original work to date. The orchestra used is large (including six horns and full brass), and the construction simple. Instead of aiming, as might have been expected from the title, at an impressionist picture that would have been the musical equivalent of a painting by Monet or Whistler, Stravinsky took a four-bar tune based on the chord of the dominant and built the whole work round that. The tune is first introduced in fragments, bar by bar; then stated in full in canon; and later appears cancrizans leading to a reprise in the tonic. The effect of the work is

explosive and exhilarating: yet from beginning to end the music is under firm and authoritative control.

The score, when finished, was posted to Rimsky-Korsakov's country estate; but a few days later the registered packet was returned with a note saying 'Not delivered because of the addressee's death'. Stravinsky immediately joined the Rimsky-Korsakov family in St. Petersburg for the funeral on June 23, and, on returning to Ustilug, composed a *Funeral Dirge*. This was performed at the first Belaiev concert in the autumn, which was dedicated to the memory of the great musician. The work was never published and, as the manuscript score disappeared in Russia during the 1917 revolution, the only record of it is contained in Stravinsky's *Chronicle*, where he writes: 'I can no longer remember the music, but I can remember the idea at the root of its conception, which was that all the solo instruments of the orchestra filed past the tomb of the master in succession, each laying down its own melody as its wreath against a deep background of tremolo murmurings simulating the vibrations of bass voices singing in chorus.' He characteristically adds: 'The impression made on the public, as well as on myself, was marked, but how far it was due to the atmosphere of mourning and how far to the merits of the composition itself I am no longer able to judge.'

To complete the list of compositions belonging to 1908, mention should be made of the Four Studies for Piano (dedicated to E. Mitusov, Nicholas Richter, Andrey and Vladimir Rimsky-Korsakov). Musically, there is nothing very distinguished about them. They show a continuing preoccupation with chromaticism and present the pianist with a number of technical problems, such as the simultaneous deployment in the first Study of duplets, triplets, and quintuplets, and the combination of quintuplets with sextuplets in the second—a proceeding which results in a blurred outline and a lack of metric definition. The fourth Study has a more characteristic lay-out, a legato semiquaver movement being accompanied by a staccato quaver bass, and the music flows without break from the first to final bar.

3

'The Fire Bird'

The performance of the *Fantastic Scherzo* and *Fireworks* at one of the Siloti concerts in the winter of 1909 marked a turning point in Stravinsky's life. Now that Rimsky-Korsakov was dead, he undoubtedly felt the need of a new protector and patron—someone

who would give him a chance to get to grips with the public and show them his mettle. As luck would have it, among the audience on this occasion was Serge Pavlovich Diaghilev, who was immediately struck by the promise revealed by these two works and in particular by the dynamic verve and flaming tone-colour of *Fireworks*.

Diaghilev was a true connoisseur of the arts. Born of a wealthy provincial family in the Selishchev barracks (Province of Novgorod) on March 19, 1872, he had passed his early youth at Bikbarda in Perm. 'The descendants of the owners of Bikbarda,' writes E. V. Panaev-Diaghilev (in later life, Mme Sert), 'consisted of four sons and four daughters; and these with their wives, husbands and children altogether totalled some fifty souls.' In this gay and cheerful atmosphere, there was a plethora of music, books and conversation; and it was Diaghilev's early ambition to become a composer. To this end, he studied music, probably under Cottogni and Sokolov; but there is a fairly well authenticated tradition that, on applying to Rimsky-Korsakov for advice, he was discouraged from making music his career owing to a fundamental lack of originality in his compositions. Turning to the visual arts, he studied paintings, visited museums and galleries, and was the founder and editor of the art magazine, *Mir Iskustva*, which for six years was to serve as the rallying point for the young Russian artists of the vanguard. At the same time, he organised various exhibitions and wrote monographs on two eighteenth-century Russian painters: Levitzky and Shibanov.

He was by no means narrow in his taste and opinions. According to Nicholas Roerich, 'in his historical exhibitions of portraits, he presented the entire story of Russia from its very beginning, with equal reverence for the modern as for the old—even the ikon painters; and in his magazine, he was equally impartial to the most modern artists and the finest discoveries in old masters'. This catholicity of taste was to remain characteristic of him to the end—'one of the greatest merits of our times', he wrote, 'is to recognise individuality under every guise and at every epoch'—but it was only to be expected that his fierce and tireless championship of contemporary art should have met with considerable suspicion and opposition in St. Petersburg and that after the political disturbances of 1905 he should have begun to look further afield. Paris was his natural goal; and there in 1906 he organised an exhibition of Russian art, which occupied twelve galleries in the Grand Palais and swallowed up a subsidy of 275,000 roubles provided by the Imperial Russian Government. This was followed next year by five orchestral concerts of Russian music at the Paris Opera House. On this

occasion, Shaliapin sang, Rachmaninov appeared as pianist, and Nikisch conducted works by Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Scriabin. The following year he concentrated on opera; and Rimsky-Korsakov's version of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* with Shaliapin in the title role was heard for the first time in Paris. By the winter of 1909 he was deeply involved in plans for the formation of a new ballet company with the help of various friends, including Fokin, Benois and Bakst; and when he heard Stravinsky's *Fantastic Scherzo* and *Fireworks*, the idea occurred to him in a flash that here might be the musical collaborator he needed. As a try-out, he asked Stravinsky to orchestrate *Kobold* by Grieg for *Le Festin* and also two numbers by Chopin for *Les Sylphides*—the opening Nocturne in A flat and the Valse Brillante in E flat which forms the finale. When this commission was dealt with, Stravinsky returned to the composition of *The Nightingale*. By the end of the summer, he had just finished the first act and its orchestration and was about to tackle Act II, when a telegram arrived from Diaghilev asking him to write the music for a new ballet to be produced the following year in Paris.

This is what had happened: Sometime previously Diaghilev had commissioned Liadov to write a ballet on the Russian fairy story of the Fire Bird, which the Venetian composer and conductor, Caterino Cavos, who settled in Russia early in the nineteenth century, had turned into an opera in 1822. Liadov had accepted, but being dilatory by nature made little or no progress. By mutual consent, the ballet was now transferred to Stravinsky who, though 'somewhat alarmed by the fact that this was a commission for a fixed date and afraid lest he should fail to complete the work in time', was flattered at being chosen by Diaghilev to collaborate with established artists like Fokin and Golovin in a work of such importance.

The newcomer was immediately accepted with enthusiasm by Diaghilev's *entourage*. In his *Reminiscences* Benois relates how they found, somewhat to their surprise, that unlike most musicians he was deeply interested in theatre, painting, architecture and sculpture. 'Although he had had no grounding in these subjects, discussion with him was very valuable to us, for he "reacted" to everything for which we lived. In those days he was a very willing and charming "pupil". He thirsted for enlightenment and longed to widen his knowledge.' As the composition of *The Fire Bird* progressed and Fokin created the choreography section by section, they began to realise that Diaghilev's flair had not failed him. This newly discovered young musician was undoubtedly a composer of genius.

The French critic, R. Brussel, who visited St. Petersburg that

winter, has described how Diaghilev invited him to come and hear Stravinsky play through his score. 'At the appointed hour, we all met in the little ground-floor room on Zamiatin Pereulok, which saw the beginnings of so many magnificent productions. The composer, young, slim, and uncommunicative, with vague meditative eyes, and lips set firm in an energetic-looking face, was at the piano. But the moment he began to play, the modest and dimly-lit dwelling glowed with a dazzling radiance. By the end of the first scene, I was conquered: by the last, I was lost in admiration. The manuscript on the music-rest, scored over with fine pencillings, revealed a masterpiece.'

The legend of the ballet deals with two types of magic beings: the glittering Fire Bird who plays the part of a good fairy, and the green-taloned ogre, Kashchei, the embodiment of evil. Woe betide the human beings that stray into his enchanted domain! The maidens are held captive, the men turned to stone. Kashchei himself is immortal—but only so long as his soul, which is preserved in a casket in the form of an egg, remains intact.

The plot is simple and shows how a young Prince, Ivan Tsarevich, wanders into Kashchei's magic garden at night in pursuit of the Fire Bird, whom he finds fluttering round a tree bearing golden apples. He captures it and exacts a feather as forfeit before agreeing to let it go. He then meets a group of thirteen maidens and falls in love with one of them, a beautiful Tsarevna, only to find that she is under the spell of Kashchei. When dawn comes and the princesses have to return to Kashchei's palace, he breaks open the gates to follow them and is about to suffer the usual penalty of petrification, when he remembers the magic feather. He waves it; and at his summons, the Fire Bird reappears and reveals to him the secret of Kashchei's immortality. Opening the casket, Ivan smashes the vital egg without a moment's hesitation, and the ogre immediately expires. Forthwith, his enchantments dissolve, all his captives are freed, and Ivan and the Tsarevna are betrothed with due solemnity.

It appears from Benois's *Reminiscences* that for some time Diaghilev's collaborators had felt that an excellent ballet could be made by transforming the ancient Russian legends and fairy tales for children into a subtler, more significant kind of fable intended to appeal to adult audiences. This helps to explain why, somewhat surprisingly, Stravinsky has stressed the moral of this ballet. 'Russian legends,' he points out, 'have as heroes characters that are simple, naïve, sometimes even frankly stupid, devoid of all malice; and it is they who are always victorious over characters that are

clever, artful, complex, cruel and powerful.' Ivan overcomes Kashchei 'because he yielded to pity, a wholly Christian notion which dominates the imagination and the ideas of the Russian people. Through pity he acquired power to free the world from the wickedness of Kashchei'.

The score consists of nineteen numbers, divided as follows: Introduction (no. 1), Tableau I (nos. 2-18) and Tableau II (no. 19). Stravinsky paid special attention to eight of these numbers, viz. the Introduction, the First Bird's Dance, the Supplication of the Fire Bird, the Princesses' Game with the Golden Apples (Scherzo), the Princesses' Horovod (Round), the Infernal Dance of all Kashchei's Subjects, Lullaby (the Fire Bird) and the slow, dignified, liturgical Finale. The remaining numbers are, for the most part, bridge passages, both in the musical and choreographic senses. They are intended to accompany a considerable amount of mime and are written on *quasi recitativo* lines. Stravinsky has underlined the emotional intention of these passages by directions such as *cantando*, *timidamente*, *andante lamentoso*, *con maligna gioia*, *andantino dolente*, *forte e furioso*, *sostenuto mystico*. But he must have realised soon afterwards that they formed the weakest part of his score, for he never used the same device again.

Before embarking on the composition of *The Fire Bird*, he had to decide how he was going to differentiate in musical terms between the natural and supernatural elements of the plot. A further subdivision of the supernatural material into good and evil was necessary in order to contrast the beneficent magic of the Fire Bird with the sorceries of Kashchei. The clue to Stravinsky's solution of this problem is to be found in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, *The Golden Cockerel*, which though finished in 1907 was not publicly performed, because of censorship difficulties, until 1910. There the human element is associated with diatonic themes and the magical element with chromatic arabesques of an oriental character. Stravinsky took this hint and chose a number of folk songs—two of them from Rimsky-Korsakov's collection published in 1876—for the music associated with Ivan, the Princesses' round and the hymn of thanksgiving in the finale. In his penetrating analysis of *The Fire Bird*, Edwin Evans has described how Stravinsky 'extracted all the magical element from the implications of one chromatic interval (the augmented fourth or diminished fifth), almost as a stage magician might have extracted it from a hat'. For the Fire Bird he chose a figure consisting of three consecutive notes of the chromatic scale followed by a leap of a major third in the same direction; for

Kashchei, a sequence of major and minor thirds, each pair of which (like the Fire Bird's four-note phrase) fits exactly into the magic interval. Edwin Evans traces the ingenious permutations and developments of these themes and shows with what amazing economy and logic Stravinsky uses them, thereby welding his score into a homogeneous whole. His rhythmical invention is no less remarkable—particularly the subtle use of syncopation in the bass of the Fire Bird's Dance to suggest its fluttering and pecking movements, the strange mathematical pattern of the carillon when Ivan breaks into Kashchei's Palace with its spreading ripples of sound, and the magnificently sustained dynamic urge of the Infernal Dance. The score is written for a very large orchestra of about a hundred players with three trumpets and four tubas on the stage and shows that, in the matter of instrumentation, the pupil had undoubtedly assimilated all his master had had to teach. The contrast of sombre and shimmering tone-colours provided an apt counterpart to the 'old gold vermiculation of Golovin's fantastic back-cloth'.

After finishing his part of the ballet on time—the score, which is dedicated to Andrey Rimsky-Korsakov, is dated St. Petersburg, May 18, 1910—Stravinsky retired to Ustilug for a rest before joining the company in Paris for the final rehearsals. But his mind was already busy with the idea of a new work, for, while finishing the last pages of *The Fire Bird* at St. Petersburg, he had had a dream or vision which gave him the clue for a symphony. In his imagination he had seen 'a solemn pagan rite: wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring'. The symphony was therefore to be the musical equivalent of a spring rite in pagan Russia; and he started to draft the final movement straight away. Later he played it to Diaghilev, who immediately grasped its possibilities as a ballet and wanted to reserve it for his company. Stravinsky agreed; and it was decided that the scenario should be worked out with the painter Roerich, who was a specialist in pagan subjects.

When Stravinsky reached Paris in June 1910, he was unknown as a composer outside a fairly narrow circle in St. Petersburg; but in her book of reminiscences, *Theatre Street*, Tamara Karsavina relates how Diaghilev pointed him out during one of the rehearsals of *The Fire Bird* in the Opera House, saying: 'Mark him well. He is a man on the eve of celebrity.'

CHAPTER II

SUCCESS AND SCANDAL
(FRANCE, SWITZERLAND AND RUSSIA, 1910-1914)

4

‘*Petrushka*’

THE FIRST season of Diaghilev’s Russian Ballet at the Châtelet Theatre, Paris, in 1909 had been a sensational success. With a troop of dancers which included Anna Pavlova, Tamara Karsavina, Ida Rubinstein and Vaslav Nijinsky, with a revolutionary choreographer like Fokin and a repertory of ballets new to Paris—*Le Pavillon d’Armide*, the Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor*, *Le Festin*, *Les Sylphides* and *Cléopâtre*—it could hardly have been otherwise. The magnificent technique of the dancers—in particular, the phenomenal revelation of Nijinsky as a male dancer—the unaccustomed idiom of much of the Russian music, the almost blatant brilliance of the stage picture and occasional streaks of oriental luxury and cruelty in the action, made a heady mixture which intoxicated the Parisian audience. Twenty years later the Comtesse de Noailles was to write: ‘Everything that could strike the imagination, intoxicate, enchant, and win one over, seemed to have been assembled on that stage, to be luxuriating there as naturally, as beautifully as vegetation responds to a beneficent climate.’

The 1910 season at the Opera House repeated and confirmed that triumph, despite the fact that the greatest ballerina of all, Pavlova, had already broken away from the company. This was a blow for Diaghilev, and also for Stravinsky, for it had originally been intended that she should dance the title role of *The Fire Bird*. When the music was played over to her, however, she thought it so complicated and meaningless that she declared, ‘I shall never dance to such nonsense!’ Karsavina took her place and was like a ‘flaming phoenix’ in her interpretation of the part. Fokin himself was Ivan Tsarevich, Fokina the Tsarevna and Bulgakov Kashchei. The ballet was performed for the first time on June 25, 1910, with Gabriel Pierné conducting, and was an immediate success. At the close of the performance, Debussy, who was in the audience, came round to the stage and specially complimented Stravinsky on his score.

To begin with, the music of *The Fire Bird* made an impression of great originality. This wore off gradually, as people in Western Europe became more familiar with the music of Rimsky-Korsakov, particularly *The Golden Cockerel*; but *The Fire Bird's* ingenuity, verve and colour always retained the public's allegiance. Stravinsky was under no illusions concerning the value of his music. Writing a quarter of a century later, he admitted that he was 'far from attributing the success of the ballet solely to the score; it was equally due to the spectacle on the stage in Golovin's magnificent setting, the brilliant interpretation by Diaghilev's dancers, and the talent of the choreographer'. He went on to say, however, that he always thought the choreography 'was complicated and overburdened with plastic detail, so that the dancers felt great difficulty in co-ordinating their steps and gestures with the music, and this often led to an unpleasant discrepancy between the movements of the dance and the imperative demands of the tempo'. But the real value of *The Fire Bird* lay in the fact that, alone among the other novelties of that season (*Carnaval*, *Sheherazade* and *Les Orientales*), it was a true example of live collaboration between Diaghilev as impresario and his chosen team of collaborators and, in particular, it established the fundamental importance of the composer in this partnership. In the future, Diaghilev would still occasionally agree that existing music should be adapted for a ballet; but, for the most part, original scores would be commissioned from contemporary composers—such as Stravinsky, Cherepnin, Reynaldo Hahn, Debussy, Ravel, Florent Schmitt, Steinberg and Richard Strauss, to mention only those whose ballets were produced before the outbreak of the 1914-18 war. So far as Stravinsky himself was concerned, *The Fire Bird* laid the foundations of his reputation in Western Europe as a young and brilliant composer and opened up further possibilities of lucrative employment in the theatre.

At the end of the ballet season, Stravinsky went to Brittany for a holiday, taking with him his family, which had joined him in Paris in time for the final performance of *The Fire Bird*; and there, at La Baule, he composed two songs for bass and piano to poems by Verlaine—*Un grand sommeil noir* and *La lune blanche*—and dedicated them to his brother Gury. There is nothing remarkable about them, except perhaps that this was the first time he had chosen a French text to set. (Nearly a quarter of a century was to elapse before he repeated this experiment with André Gide's *Persephone*.) Though both songs have a key signature of five flats, their tonality is ambiguous and appears to revolve round B flat without necessarily

declaring for the key of B flat minor. The setting of *Un grand sommeil noir* shows a continuing obsession with the Debussyan fifths and thirds that had already made their appearance in the introduction to *The Nightingale*. *La lune blanche* has one or two impressionist touches, which are not really characteristic of the composer, such as the vocal *portamenti* to illustrate the crying wind ('... où le vent pleure ...') and the peace that falls from the sky ('... un vaste et tendre apaisement semble descendre du firmament ...').

After this mild flirtation with impressionism, Stravinsky left La Baule at the end of August, taking his family to Clarens in Switzerland; and here the idea for a new work came to him. It was to be a concerted piece for piano and orchestra, a kind of *Burlesque* or *Scherzo* or *Konzertstück*, in which the piano would represent a 'puppet, suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the orchestra with diabolical cascades of *arpeggi*, and the orchestra replying with menacing fanfares'. For his thematic material he turned again to the interval of the augmented fourth which had played such a dominating role in the composition of *The Fire Bird* and proceeded to develop it, not by exploring the intervening intervals, but by erecting two major chords whose roots were an augmented fourth apart and using them in combination and permutation. One point emerged at once: by choosing C and F sharp as his roots, Stravinsky (like Ravel in his *Jeux d'Eau* nine years previously) was able to obtain one chord on white notes and the other on black, a pianistic device especially useful for rapid cadenza passages. From this musical germ grew a movement, written in burlesque vein and made up of short broken episodes embodying the essence of the conflict between the anonymous puppet and the bullying orchestra. With this semi-dramatic conception at the root of his composition, Stravinsky felt that he needed a title for his puppet—something that would help listeners to grasp the intention behind the music; and in due course the idea came to him that this could be none other than the 'poor, funny, ugly, sentimental and misguided character, constantly shaken with rebellious rage, whether justified or not, that is known in France as Pierrot, in Germany as Kasperle and in Russia as Petrushka'. Once the title was settled, a second movement was planned—a Russian dance in C—but before a third could be added, Diaghilev arrived to find out how the spring rite symphony was progressing. Great was his surprise to be confronted instead with an instalment of a completely new work, and one which at first sight appeared to be destined for the concert hall and not the stage. But he immediately perceived the plastic possibilities of the subject and began to

persuade Stravinsky to develop the theme of the puppet's sufferings and make it into a whole ballet. The next day his mind was made up—a ballet it should be—and, despite the fact that only a few weeks previously they had quarrelled bitterly over the attribution of *Sheherazade*, he wrote at once to Benois who he had already decided would be the ideal collaborator for the action, scenery and costumes: 'You must make the ballet which Igor Stravinsky and I have in mind. Yesterday I heard the music of the Russian Dance and Petrushka's Cries, which he has just composed. . . . Who else but you could help us in this problem?'

Although Diaghilev's suggestion went no further than the inclusion of a performance of Petrushka, the Russian Punch and Judy show, in the setting of the old St. Petersburg Carnival that immediately preceded Lent, Benois at once grasped the possibilities of this theme. From his youth he had been a devotee of the Petrushka theatre; and, in his own words, he was specially tempted by 'the idea of depicting the Butter Week Fair on the stage, the dear *balagani* which had been the delight of my childhood'. The fact that these *balagani* had been discontinued about 1900 made him all the more anxious to immortalise them. In these circumstances, he decided he could no longer maintain his attitude of 'injured pride'. He accordingly accepted Diaghilev's offer and set to work straight away.

It might have been thought that misunderstandings would arise with Stravinsky in Switzerland and Benois in St. Petersburg—and it must be remembered that Benois did not hear any of the music Stravinsky had composed until the following December—but, in actual fact, all went well. Stravinsky was in complete agreement with Benois's decision to scrap the apparatus of the ordinary Punch and Judy show and arrange the action so that the puppets should come to life at the command of an old Showman. As Benois says in his *Reminiscences*: 'Their coming to life should be somehow accompanied by suffering. The greater the contrast between the real, live people and the automatons who had just been given life, the sharper the interest of the action would be.'

In the published score of the ballet, which is dedicated to Benois, the names of Stravinsky and Benois appear as the joint authors. If it is necessary to allocate their respective shares in this collaboration, it would probably be true to say that the character of Petrushka and the idea of using the St. Petersburg Carnival as a setting were due to Stravinsky, while Benois was responsible for the Ballerina and the Moor, and also for all the Carnival characters, with the

exception of the *riageni* or maskers who were originally suggested by Stravinsky. The definitive scenario runs as follows:

Tableau I. (The Admiralty Square, St. Petersburg, during Carnival week [Maslenitsa], about 1830. It is a sunny winter's day—probably Shrove Tuesday; and the scene shows a corner of the fair. In the background, a glimpse of roundabouts, swings and a helter-skelter. On the left, a booth with a balcony for the 'Died' [the compère of the fair]; beneath it, a table with a large samovar. In the centre, a Showman's miniature theatre. On the right, sweet stalls and a peep-show.)

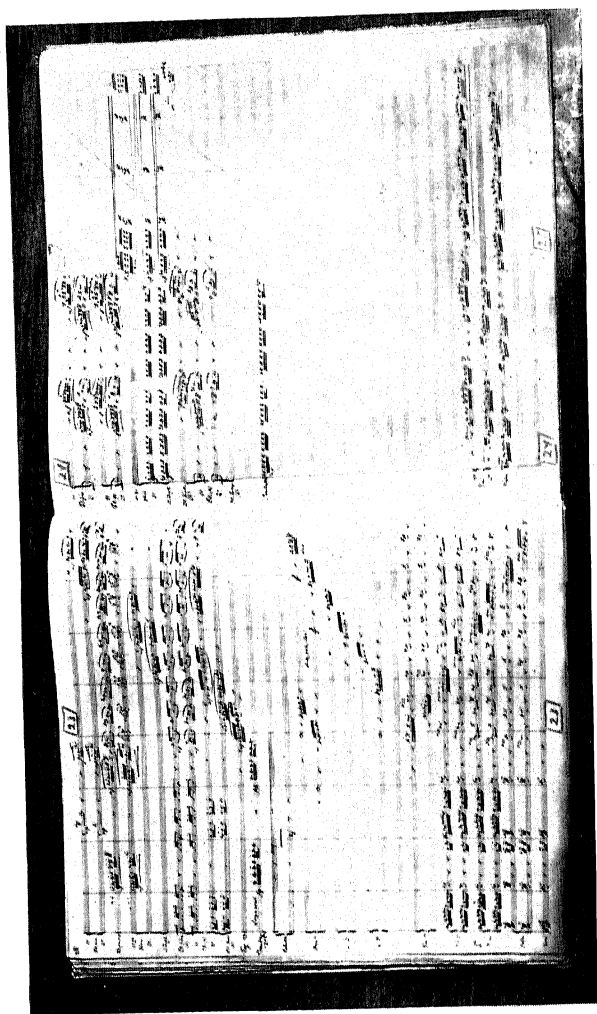
Crowds of people stroll about the scene: there are drunkards staggering about arm-in-arm, children clustering round the peep-show, and women at the stalls. A man appears with a hurdy-gurdy. He is accompanied by a dancer. Just as she starts to dance, a man with a musical box and another dancer turn up on the opposite side of the stage. After performing simultaneously for a short while, the rivals give up the unequal struggle and retire. Amid all this merry-making, an old Showman presents three puppets to the public: Petrushka, the Ballerina and the Moor. He charms them into life with his flute, and they begin to dance—at first keeping on their hooks in the little theatre, but then, to the general astonishment, stepping down from the theatre and dancing among the public in the open.

Tableau II. (Petrushka's Cell. The cardboard walls are painted black, with stars and a crescent moon upon them. Heads of devils on a gold ground ornament the folding doors, which lead into the Ballerina's cell. On one of the walls is a portrait of the Showman frowning.) Although the Showman's magic has imbued all three puppets with human feelings, and emotions, it is Petrushka who feels and suffers most. He is bitterly conscious of his ugliness and grotesque appearance, the way he is ignored by his companions, and his complete dependence on his cruel master. He tries to console himself by falling in love with the Ballerina, and at one moment he thinks he has succeeded; but, alas! she is repelled by his uncouth antics and flees from him. In his despair, he curses the Showman and hurls himself at his portrait, but, falling short, succeeds only in tearing a hole through the cardboard wall of his cell.

Tableau III. (The Moor's Cell. The wall-paper is patterned with green palm trees and fantastic fruits on a red ground. On the right, a door leads into the Ballerina's cell.) The Moor, clad in sumptuous clothes, is lying on a divan, playing with a coconut. Although he is brutal and stupid, he attracts the Ballerina, who uses all her wiles to captivate him and succeeds. Petrushka intrudes upon their love scene, furiously jealous; but the Moor throws him out.



THE FIRE BIRD: Goncharova's design for King Kashchei in
the 1926 revival by the Russian Ballet.



THE FIRE BIRD: MS. score of the ballet—Ivan Tsarevich captures the Fire Bird.

Tableau IV. (The Fair, as in Tableau I.) It is evening; and the festivities have reached their height. A roistering merchant, accompanied by two gypsies, scatters handfuls of banknotes among the crowd. Coachmen dance with nursemaids. A peasant playing a pipe crosses the stage with his performing bear; and finally a group of maskers—including devil, goat and pig—leads everyone in a whirlwind dance, while blue flares are let off in the wings. Suddenly, there is a commotion in the Showman's theatre. The rivalry between the two puppets has taken a fatal turn; and Petrushka rushes out from behind the curtain, pursued by the Moor whom the Ballerina tries to restrain. The Moor strikes down Petrushka with his scimitar. It begins to snow; and Petrushka dies, surrounded by the astonished crowd. (The Ballerina and Moor have disappeared.) A policeman is sent to fetch the Showman, who hastens to reassure the bystanders that Petrushka is merely a puppet with a wooden head and a body stuffed with sawdust. The crowd disperses as the night grows darker; and the Showman is left behind. But as he starts to drag the puppet off the stage, he is horrified to see Petrushka's ghost appear above the little theatre, threatening and jeering at him. He drops the puppet and scuttles off, casting a nervous glance behind him. The curtain falls.

Into this framework, the music already written for the abandoned piano concerto fitted admirably: the first movement became Tableau II; the second movement (Russian Dance) was earmarked for the end of Tableau I; and the original conflict between the piano and orchestra became submerged in the wider conflict between Petrushka the puppet and Petrushka the human being. Stravinsky, who had moved with his family to Beaulieu in the south of France, now set to work on the beginning of Tableau I. Needing for the fair scenes a motif that would express in musical terms the general bustle and disorder of the crowd, he turned once more to the device of alternating fifths and thirds. In different forms, this has already been used in the introduction of *The Nightingale* and the song, *Un grand sommeil noir*. Now it became the skeleton of an accordion motif that formed the background for both original and borrowed material in the first and last Tableaux.

As in *The Fire Bird*, Stravinsky had no hesitation about using Russian folksongs wherever they suited his purpose. When the curtain rises on the fair ground in Tableau I, the 'half pagan, half liturgical theme' (as Stravinsky himself called it) that accompanies the passage of the drunkards across the stage is derived from Rimsky-Korsakov's 1876 collection, where it appears (no. 47) as an Easter song from the government of Smolensk. Similarly, for the

interlinked suite of nursemaids' and coachmen's dances in the final Tableau, he chose three well-known folk songs: 'I was at a feast' (which had previously been used by Balakirev in his *Overture on Three Russian Themes* and by Chaikovsky in his fourth Symphony); 'Oh my room, my little room,' a popular balalaika tune; and 'I was going up a hill' (which is also to be found in Rimsky-Korsakov's 1876 collection). These borrowings undoubtedly helped to give authentic local colour to the crowd scenes. Nor do they exhaust the tale of Stravinsky's indebtedness. In Tableau III, he used a waltz from *Danses Styriennes* by Josef Lanner to underline the Ballerina's frivolity; and what could have been more appropriate for the hurdy-gurdy episode in the middle of the first Tableau than a tune that was then being played daily by a persistent barrel-organ outside his hotel at Beaulieu:

*Elle avait un' jambe en bois,
Et que ça ne servait pas,
Elle y mettait par dessous
Un' rondell' de caoutchouc.*

The date of composition of this particular passage is fixed by the fact that while Stravinsky was engaged on it, he received the news of Tolstoy's death at Astapovo (November 20, 1910).

Diaghilev was staying at Monte Carlo during the autumn and kept in close touch with Stravinsky; but when he returned to St. Petersburg for Christmas, he invited Stravinsky to join him so that Benois and Fokin could hear the music he had written to date. Stravinsky did so and took with him the whole of the first two Tableaux and the beginning of the third. After about a fortnight's stay, he returned to Beaulieu and resumed work on his score; but his activity was interrupted towards the end of the winter by an acute attack of nicotine poisoning. Fortunately he recovered in time to set out for Rome at the end of April, where Diaghilev's company were giving performances at the Costanzi Theatre during the International Exhibition. According to Benois, 'the finale did not come to Stravinsky at once, and he had to search and use different combinations for it. We were staying at the same hotel in Rome for nearly a month, and every morning I used to hear from my room a confused tangle of sounds, interrupted from time to time by long pauses. This was the maturing of the last bars of the fourth Tableau.' The score was finished on May 26; and as soon as it had been played over to Diaghilev and Benois, the ballet was put into rehearsal in the restaurant of the Costanzi Theatre.

The first performance took place at the Châtelet Theatre, Paris, on June 13, 1911. Nijinsky danced the title role, Karsavina the Ballerina, Orlov the Moor, and Cecchetti the Showman. The costumes and scenery were by Benois; the choreography by Fokin; and Pierre Monteux conducted. From the beginning there was never any doubt of the ballet's success: the public accepted it instantly, and the critics were not slow to follow. In a letter to Jacques Rivière, dated September 9, 1911, Alain Fournier speaks of the audacity of the musical simplifications in the score and calls the ballet as a whole 'inextricable and precise, like a dream'. In any case, Nijinsky's performance as Petrushka was something quite outstanding. Stravinsky has himself paid homage to the 'perfection with which he became the very incarnation of this character'; and it is related that Sarah Bernhardt's comment was, '*J'ai peur, j'ai peur, car je vois l'acteur le plus grand du monde*'.

There is no doubt that *Petrushka* is a work of great originality, and the score shows a marked development in the direction of musical objectivity. There is now no trace of the *quasi recitativo* passages that weakened the structure of *The Fire Bird*. Although it is probably true to say that almost any proficient Russian composer with a gift of the vernacular might have been responsible for the bulk of the fair music in the first and last Tableaux, yet certain passages in the score are quite unique: in particular, the strange little chromatic section where the Showman's sleight of hand brings the three puppets to life; the Russian Dance which follows, as inevitable in its metre as a piece of clockwork machinery and as resilient as a spring; the whole of the second Tableau with its sequence of brief contrasting episodes, some hardly more than a phrase in length, yet each one so carefully characterised, fully integrated and fitting so perfectly into place, that the resulting movement owes much of its appeal to the delicate balancing of so many different strains and stresses; and, finally, the coda to the ballet (Petrushka's death scene), formed of fragmentary musical phrases connected with Petrushka's life and the business of the fair, which is like an epitome of all that has gone before. The score has one big weakness—the casual way in which the piano, which played a predominantly *concertante* role in the original conception and which is indissolubly linked with the portrayal of Petrushka's character in the Russian Dance and throughout Tableau II, is almost completely ignored in the last two Tableaux. It even has no comment to make when Petrushka dies miserably in the snow.

There were also various weaknesses in the original production.

Stravinsky himself was not completely satisfied by the choreography. 'It was a pity,' he writes, 'that the crowd movements had been neglected. I mean that they were left to the arbitrary improvisation of the performers instead of being choreographically regulated in accordance with the clearly defined exigencies of the music. I regret this all the more because the *danses d'ensemble* of the nursemaids, coachmen and maskers, and the solo dances, must be regarded as Fokin's finest creations.' This discrepancy was probably due in part to the importance Benois attached to the parts of walkers-on. In his desire to make a literal reconstruction of the old *balagani*, he had apparently decided that the presence of various types would 'give the illusion of life'. There were to be 'people of good society' with elegant manners, military men 'like real soldiers and officers of the time of Nicholas I', street-hawkers who seemed 'really to be offering their goods', and peasants 'looking like real *muzhiks* and *babas*'. Similarly, in the original production, there was a real merry-go-round 'on which children used to have rides and windmills whose multi-coloured, crossed sails waved in the air', as well as gingerbread and sweetmeat stalls. This admixture of realism with the conventions of ballet dancing was bound to prove offensive in the long run; so it is not surprising to find that considerable changes—mainly in the direction of simplification—were made in the ballet during the period it remained in the repertory of Diaghilev's company. Benois himself relates how the 'case containing the "museum rarities" of the production slipped off the crane during its unloading in Buenos Aires and sank and was lost in the sea'.

It must also be remembered that Stravinsky and his collaborators did not always see eye to eye over some of the characters. According to Stravinsky, the Showman (as was appropriate to his flute cadenza *à la Weber* in Tableau I) was to have been a German, a Hoffmannesque figure rather similar to the film Dr. Caligari; but Benois changed him into an oriental magician reminiscent of the Astrologer in *The Golden Cockerel*. Stravinsky conceived the Moor as a brutal savage, monotonously padding up and down the sides of his cell like a caged tiger and occasionally interrupting his pacing with an outburst of vicious snarling; but apparently this was insufficient material for Fokin to work on. According to Edwin Evans, 'a symbolical episode' was therefore inserted in Tableau III: the Moor is shown dallying with a coconut; shaking it, he discovers that it is not empty and unsuccessfully tries to break it open with his scimitar; he then decides it must be stronger than himself, and bows down and worships it. The weakness of Fokin's choreography in this scene

is particularly marked at the moment when the Moor's prowling theme is resumed during the Ballerina's waltz.¹ This is all the more to be regretted, since the music provides a cue for a fascinating essay in counterpoint movement, which the choreographer has completely ignored.

These are some of the shortcomings and blemishes that it is hoped will be corrected in future productions, for in the course of time *Petrushka* has become such a favourite with the public that sooner or later every important ballet company wishes to revive it.

5

'The Rite of Spring'

At the end of the 1911 Paris season of the Russian Ballet, Stravinsky returned to his country estate at Ustilug. Before reverting to the composition of the interrupted spring rite symphony and wishing, presumably, to refresh himself by composing something shorter and less onerous, he decided to set some verses by the contemporary Russian poet, K. Balmont. Two of these—*Blue Forget-me-not* and *The Dove* (dedicated respectively to his mother and to Ludmilla Gabrilovich Beliankin)—are straightforward lyrics for voice and piano and call for no special comment; but the third, *Zvezdoliki* or *The King of the Stars*, is a cantata for male voices and orchestra and occupies a unique place in his output. It is strewn with relentless discords, voice clashing against voice, voices against orchestra, major keys against minor, as the composer erects his toppling chord structures; and the choice of so strange an example of apocalyptic mysticism as Balmont's poem is not only surprising but also somewhat disturbing. The Russian original may be freely paraphrased as follows:

*His eyes are like stars, like fires furrowing space.
His countenance is like the sun at high noon.
The luminous tints of the sky—purple, azure and gold—embroider
the gorgeous robe he wears for his rebirth among us.
Thunder rolls round him in a desolate sky heavy with storms.
Splendid stars in sevenfold glory surround his radiant head.
Lightning strikes the hills and brings the spring flowers to life.
'Do you cherish the Word?' he asked, and all of us answered,
'For ever and ever.'
'My power,' said he, 'is absolute.'
Then the thunder pealed louder.*

¹ Six bars before section 73.

'It is time,' said he in his glory. 'The harvest awaits. Amen.'

Pious and fervent, we followed.

The thunderbolt cleft the clouds.

The splendid stars in their sevenfold glory showed us the desert road.

Certainly, the poet's vision is adequately matched by the composer's involved harmonic researches; but the result is so transcendental as to defy performance, and, in fact, the work has never been played—mainly, as Stravinsky himself admits, because of the 'complexity of its choral writing as regards intonation'.

It was now time to decide on the form which the spring rite ballet was to take; and Stravinsky accordingly visited Roerich, who was staying at Talashkino, the country estate of Princess Tenishev, the former patroness of *Mir Iskustva*. Writing to Diaghilev, Roerich gave the following description of the agreed course of the action: 'The first set should transport us to the foot of a sacred hill, in a lush plain, where Slavonic tribes are gathered together to celebrate the spring rites. In this scene, there is an old witch who predicts the future; a marriage by capture; round dances. Then follows the most solemn moment. The wise elder is brought from the village to imprint his sacred kiss on the new-flowering earth; and during this rite the crowd is seized with a mystic terror. After this uprush of terrestrial joy, the second scene sets a celestial mystery before us. Young virgins dance in circles on the sacred hill amid enchanted rocks, before choosing the victim they intend to honour, and who will presently dance her last dance before the ancient old men clad in bear skins. Then the greybeards dedicate the victim to the god Yarilo.' No plot or argument was prefixed to the published score; but the movements were given simple titles—Spring Dances, Games of the Rival Clans, Procession of the Wise Elder, Adoration of the Earth, etc.—which it was considered would provide the choreographer with sufficient indications to enable him to devise a plastic counterpart to the music. It was agreed by the collaborators that these 'pictures of pagan Russia' should be divided into two parts—Part One: The Adoration of the Earth (Day), and Part Two: The Sacrifice (Night)—and that each part should be prefaced by an orchestral introduction. The title of the work was not fixed until later when the composition was almost complete.

After two days at Talashkino, Stravinsky, being in a hurry to return to Ustilug, caught a goods train and found that, owing to an oversight, he had to share the wagon with a bull.

He immediately set to work on the first movement of Part One (the Auguries of Spring)—according to Edwin Evans, the final

Ritual Dance of the Chosen Victim already existed in draft at this stage, having been written in the spring of 1910—and the next two movements were completed by the autumn, when he and his family moved to Clarens. By the following spring he had finished the first part and was half-way through the next one, having reached the Glorification of the Chosen Victim movement, though the introduction to Part Two was not yet written; but at this point he heard to his disappointment that, for reasons connected with the choice of Nijinsky as choreographer, Diaghilev had decided to postpone the first performance until his 1913 Paris season. So he slowed up his working pace; and the orchestration was eventually completed on March 8, 1913, eleven bars being added to the introduction to Part Two¹ on March 29. The score was dedicated to his collaborator, Roerich.

In *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky wanted to express the rebirth of nature after the suspension of winter, the victory of the sun with its renewal of light and heat, and the regeneration of human life through the sacrifice of the individual, and at the same time to emphasise the mental awe that is roused by the great natural forces of creation and the vague yet profound disquiet that accompanies the approach of adolescence. By setting the action in primitive Russia, he and Roerich perforce adopted a pagan symbolism which may in some respects appear cruel, but has nevertheless a universal and even a Christian application. There have been many descriptions of *The Rite of Spring*—including an article in *Montjoie* (May 29, 1913), signed by the composer but later disowned by him, which was based on an interview he gave to Ricciotto Canudo—but none has excelled Jean Cocteau's pithy phrase when he called it 'the georgics of prehistory'.

To achieve his purpose, Stravinsky chose simple diatonic themes, often no more than four notes in compass, which are hardly to be distinguished from genuine Russian folk songs. (The only borrowed theme in the score is the bassoon tune at the opening of the introduction to Part One, which is derived from a Lithuanian folk-song.) Generally speaking, the development of these themes is achieved by a process of breaking them down and re-arranging and permuting their constituent notes and note-values so as to avoid that minimum of literal repetition or imitation needed to imply formal symmetry. This method of thematic exposition has the effect of exasperating the nerves of listeners who have been nurtured on the formal music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The reiteration of the

¹ At sections 86 and 87.

limited number of notes in a simple theme becomes monotonous in its insistence; and yet the pattern is continually shifting, changing and being renewed. Just when it seems that the last permutation has been reached and some part of the pattern is now bound to be repeated, the melodic line is abruptly broken and a new episode begins.

This restricted type of thematic material gives little scope for contrapuntal development; but occasionally a simple phrase is treated in canon, or two or more themes overlap or are simultaneously deployed. For example, in the introduction to Part One four different themes and five independent ornamental figures appear at the same time,¹ giving a polyphonic impression of exuberant effervescence.

More important if the music was to succeed in playing on the listeners' nerves, appealing to their instincts rather than their reason and inducing a feeling of panic, was the question of rhythm. Stravinsky chose an undeviating metronomical beat for each movement or episode and banished all possibility of *tempo rubato*, except in the impressionist introduction to Part One. The metrical foundation is often underlined by *ostinato* accompaniments which show much variety of structure. Some are fully developed at their first appearance; others are built up as they go along. In the Ritual Dance² there is a complex *ostinato*, mainly for percussion, which is virtually a counter-subject in itself and fills a 5/4 bar. The time signature of the main subject varies between, 5/4, 4/4 and 3/4, and at first the *ostinato* is lopped of one beat or two to make it fit the bars; but later it persists in its 5/4 shape and cuts relentlessly across the bar lines. Sometimes an unbroken pulsation is obtained by alternation between the treble and the bass (as in the opening sections of the Glorification of the Chosen Victim and the Ritual Dance); and in these passages Stravinsky seems to find a special need for complex syncopation. Every device of compound metre (combination of twos, threes and fours) is used to avoid regular stresses; and the strong beats are, wherever possible, fortified by an unsparing use of percussion.

Harmonically, the score shows a bitonal development which was foreshadowed in Tableau II of *Petrushka* and worked out in much greater detail in *The King of the Stars*. Most of the harmony in *The Rite* radiates from an agglomeration of notes formed by the superimposition of two common chords with their roots a semitone apart. One of these sometimes carried a minor seventh—for

¹ Section 11.

² Section 174 & seq.

instance, the chord in the stamping passage at the beginning of the Auguries of Spring movement¹ consists of the chords of E major and E flat major with D flat added. Although Stravinsky apparently prefers to look on this as a simple chord of the 13th, it seems likely, in view of his avowed predilection for composing at the piano, that it came into existence as a bitonal aggregation of two separate chords that conveniently fitted his hands. In the above example, and also in the first subject of the Ritual Dance, the constituent chords are major; but in the introduction to Part Two, they appear as chords of E flat minor and C sharp minor alternating above a D minor pedal.

A clear distinction between major and minor is not always maintained. In some places a tune seems unable to decide whether it is in the major or minor;² and sometimes an *ostinato* accompaniment or a harmonised passage may include both major and minor thirds simultaneously.³ Although the chord of the 13th as used by Stravinsky is found on analysis to imply this major-minor combination, it is not a device that is peculiar to *The Rite of Spring*. As mentioned above, it had already been used in *The King of the Stars*; and it will often be found to recur in his later works.

A tremendous internal tension is set up in the score between the simplicity of the diatonic thematic material and the discordant complexity of the harmonic texture. This is enhanced by the instrumentation, highly sophisticated means being used to obtain a deliberately primitive effect. The orchestra is very large—Stravinsky writes for eighteen woodwind, eighteen brass, and strings to match—and every opportunity is seized of exploiting unusual instrumental registers and sonorities. Percussion is raised to the importance of a fourth orchestral department; and the volume of sound that assaults the ear, though big and occasionally overwhelming, never escapes control.

This was the kind of score that was handed over to Nijinsky to work on. He had made his first appearance as choreographer in 1912, when his plastic, almost two-dimensional interpretation of Debussy's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* caused a sensation and a scandal during the Russian Ballet season in Paris—a scandal that was mainly due to an error of taste whereby the Faun, as danced by Nijinsky

¹ Section 13.

² Cf. the oboe solo at section 5 of the introduction to Part One.

³ Cf. particularly the nine bars *ostinato* beginning at section 10 of the introduction to Part One, and the harmonisation in the Mystic Rounds movement (section 91 & seq.) of the theme which first appeared in the introduction to Part Two.

himself, indulged in a too openly erotic movement at the close of the ballet. The choreography of *L'Après-Midi*, whatever its intrinsic merits may be, certainly does not fit Debussy's impressionist music; and Stravinsky was filled with misgiving at the idea of collaborating with him over *The Rite of Spring*. In his *Chronicle* he maintains that Nijinsky was ignorant of the most elementary notions of music. 'He could neither read it nor play any instrument; and his reactions to it were expressed in banal phrases or by repeating what he had picked up from the friends that surrounded him. Indeed, one began to wonder whether he had any ideas about it of his own. These gaps in his understanding were so serious that his plastic visions, though often of great beauty, could not compensate for them.' Stravinsky found it would be necessary to teach him the rudiments of music—note values, time, rhythm and so on—before any progress could be made with the choreography: and this he did, to the best of his ability. Even so, he found himself particularly exasperated by Nijinsky's tendency to complicate the dancers' steps with all sorts of unnecessary details and, in so doing, unconsciously to slow down the tempo of the music—a method of choreographic composition that leads to disintegration when in actual performance the music is played at its proper speed.

It is only fair to Nijinsky, however, to state that in *The Rite of Spring* he was probably more interested in developing a new experiment in ballet technique than in finding the correct plastic equivalent to Stravinsky's score. In order to help him, Diaghilev had engaged Mme Marie Rambert as an expert in eurhythmics from the Dalcroze School. Nijinsky realised that the subject of *The Rite* gave him a perfect excuse for reversing the classical positions so that the dancers' movements would be made *en dedans* instead of *en dehors*; but this break with tradition aroused the greatest opposition among the dancers of the company. It can accordingly be imagined how stormy and quarrelsome was the atmosphere of the rehearsals during the winter and spring of 1913. It looked as if he had been given a task beyond his powers. 'Seeing he was losing prestige with the company, but being strongly supported by Diaghilev,' wrote Stravinsky, 'he became presumptuous, capricious and unmanageable. Not unnaturally this led to a number of painful scenes which made the work of rehearsal no easier.' All this hardly augured well for the success of the completed ballet.

The first performance took place on May 29, 1913, in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, which had recently been opened under the management of G. Astruc. The part of the Chosen Victim was

danced by Marie Piltz, and the Wise Elder by Varontsov. Pierre Monteux conducted the orchestra, which had carefully rehearsed the difficult score.

The ballet seemed doomed from the start. Laughter broke out among the audience while the introduction was being played; and at that point Stravinsky left the auditorium in disgust and went behind the stage. The scandalous scene in the theatre has been described by various eye-witnesses. According to Carl van Vechten, 'a certain part of the audience was thrilled by what it considered to be a blasphemous attempt to destroy music as an art, and, swept away with wrath, began, very soon after the rise of the curtain, to make cat-calls and to offer audible suggestions as to how the performance should proceed. The orchestra played unheard, except occasionally when a slight lull occurred. The young man seated behind me in the box stood up during the course of the ballet to enable himself to see more clearly. The intense excitement under which he was labouring betrayed itself presently when he began to beat rhythmically on the top of my head with his fists. My emotion was so great that I did not feel the blows for some time.' Romola Pulsky (later Nijinsky's wife), who was in the auditorium during the first part of the ballet, describes how 'people whistled, insulted the performers and the composer, shouted, laughed. Monteux threw desperate glances towards Diaghilev, who sat in Astruc's box and made signs to him to keep on playing. Astruc in this indescribable noise ordered the lights to be turned on, and the fights and controversy did not remain in the domain of sound, but actually culminated in bodily conflict. One beautifully dressed lady in an orchestra box stood up and slapped the face of a young man who was hissing in the next box. Her escort arose, and cards were exchanged between the men. A duel followed next day.' Jean Cocteau saw the old Comtesse de Pourtalès stand up in her box with her face aflame and her tiara awry and heard her cry out, as she brandished her fan, 'This is the first time in sixty years that anyone has dared to make fun of me!'

Meanwhile, there was a scene of great confusion on the stage. The dancers were trembling and almost in tears. Nijinsky, dressed in his practice costume, with Stravinsky beside him, stood on a chair in the wings, beating out the rhythm with his fists and shouting *Ras, dva, tre* to the dancers, who could hear nothing of his counting or of the orchestra because of the tumult in the auditorium and the noise of their own dance-steps. The only moment of respite came with the final dance of the Chosen Victim. During the last bars of

the preceding Rite of the Ancestors, as the hitherto motionless figure of Marie Piltz was seen to be seized by a growing paroxysm of trembling, there were catcalls from the gallery: '*Un docteur . . . un dentiste . . . deux docteurs . . .*' and so on; but as the movement progressed and Marie Piltz was galvanised into tense, angular convulsions by the tortured rhythm of the music, the dance of this doomed victim was seen to have 'such indescribable force and beauty that in its conviction of sacrifice it disarmed even the chaotic audience. They forgot to fight.'

At the end of the performance, everyone was completely exhausted. Cocteau has given a memorable account of how, about two o'clock in the morning, Stravinsky, Diaghilev, Nijinsky and himself got into a cab and were driven to the Bois de Boulogne. 'No one spoke; the night was fresh and kindly. From the scent of acacias, we knew we had reached the first trees. When we came to the lakes, Diaghilev, who was thickly clad in a coat of opossum, began to murmur in Russian; I felt that Stravinsky and Nijinsky were listening and, as the coachman lit his lantern, I saw tears on Diaghilev's face. He went on murmuring, slowly, indefatigably.

' "What is it?" I asked.

' "Pushkin."

' There was a long silence; and then Diaghilev stammered another short phrase, and the emotion of my two companions seemed so deep that I couldn't help interrupting him to know why.

' "It's difficult to translate," said Stravinsky, "really difficult: too Russian . . . too Russian. . . . It means more or less, 'Will you come for a trip to the islands?' Yes, that's it. It's typically Russian because, you know, at St. Petersburg we are accustomed to go to the islands, just as this evening we have come to the Bois de Boulogne; and it is while we were on our way to the islands that we conceived the idea of *The Rite of Spring*."

' For the first time we alluded to the evening's scandal. It was dawn when we returned. No one can imagine how quiet and nostalgic these three men were; and, whatever Diaghilev may have done afterwards, I shall never forget him sitting in that cab reciting Pushkin in the Bois de Boulogne with his cheeks wet with tears.'

Although the scandal of the first night was not repeated at subsequent performances that season, the ballet had a gruelling reception from English critics when it was presented later that summer at Drury Lane. Here are a few excerpts from contemporary press notices, the last one taken from a specialist musical journal: 'Surely such stuff should be played on primeval instruments—or, better,

not played at all.'—'The music is ingenious, since if the composer be more than two years of age he must have suppressed all he knew in order to devise it.'—'A crowd of savages, with knowledge or instinct enough to let them make the instruments speak, might have produced such noises.'—'Practically it has no relation to music at all as most of us understand the word.' The hostility shown by the general press to Stravinsky's music certainly dates—in this country, at least—from the first performance of *The Rite of Spring*.

An objective assessment of the original production is difficult today, because immediately after the London season the company sailed for South America without Diaghilev, Nijinsky married Romola Pulsky, a step that led to a violent break with Diaghilev, and *The Rite* was never seen again with his choreography. According to Cocteau, the main defect of Nijinsky's version consisted in the 'parallelism of the music and the movement—in the lack of play, or counterpoint, between them. This showed that the same chord often repeated is less tiring to the ear than the frequent repetition of a single gesture to the eye.' André Levinson amplifies this criticism: 'The sole purpose of Nijinsky's choreography was to express in movement the rhythm of Stravinsky's score. Rhythm seemed to him to be the only force capable of taming the primitive soul of man. The dancers translated into movement the duration and accentuation of the sounds, their volume and timbre, and expressed the acceleration or retardation of the beat by a systematised series of gymnastic movements, bending and straightening their knees, raising and dropping their heels, stamping, and persistently emphasising each accent.' Stravinsky himself, who apparently wanted the spectacular part of the ballet to be a 'series of rhythmic mass movements of the greatest simplicity, with no superfluous details or complications to suggest a sense of effort', considered Nijinsky's choreography to be a 'very laboured and barren effort rather than a plastic realisation flowing simply and naturally from what the music demanded'.

When the ballet was revived in 1921, a completely new choreographic version was prepared by Massine, which remained in the repertory of the Russian Ballet until Diaghilev's death. On this occasion, the emotional significance of the original conception was ignored, and the action stripped of its historical and archaeological pretensions. The result was a purely formal and abstract exercise, which seems to have pleased the composer, who considered that there were 'moments of great beauty in the group movements when the plastic expression was in perfect accord with the music', though

he still complained that as a whole the production was 'forced and artificial' mainly because of Massine's tendency to break up the musical units into choreographic fractions. Levinson, however, is quite damning in his assessment. He considered the dancers' movements to be 'illogical, unjustified, poorly designed and expressionless. Whereas Nijinsky's dancers were tormented by the rhythm, Massine's played clumsily with it.' And his final verdict is that 'while flashes of genius illuminated Nijinsky's amorphous version, the pretentious artifice of Massine's choreography remained empty and ineffectual'.

In 1941 Walt Disney chose the score of *The Rite* to accompany the prehistoric section of his colour trick film, *Fantasia*, showing the earth in spasmodic travail with its spouting volcanoes, and the agonies of the clumsy animals of that period—dinosaurs, dinotheres, pterodactyls and the like—as they fought each other savagely and vainly tried to adapt themselves to the violent climatic fluctuations that were to lead to their inevitable extinction. In some ways, this is probably the most effective spectacle that has ever been devised to illustrate the score, though Disney has deliberately abandoned the original idea of Stravinsky and Roerich of spring as a cyclic manifestation of the rebirth of nature and substituted for it an awe-inspiring conception of the springtime of the world, when order and life were just beginning to emerge from the protozoic slime. For Disney's purposes, it was not necessary to cut the music, but the sequence of the numbers was slightly altered. The resultant film has been seen and enjoyed by audiences that can certainly be numbered in millions; and this ballet score has consequently obtained a far wider currency than any of Stravinsky's other compositions.

The extraordinary fact that during the first performance of the ballet the music was virtually inaudible to audience and dancers alike—and this is borne out by all who were present on that occasion—meant that the merits of the score were unlikely to be justly appreciated until it could be heard in more favourable circumstances. That opportunity came in April, 1914, when Monteux conducted concert performances of both *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* in Paris; and the result was a brilliant vindication of *The Rite* after the scandal in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées a year before. In 1921, a similar rehabilitation ceremony took place in London, when Eugene Goossens included the work in one of his symphony concerts. But to some sensitive listeners on that occasion it seemed that there was now something almost more scandalous about the audience's placid acceptance of the music than the actual storm of

protests and counter-protests that the ballet had elicited at its first performance. In his satire, *Concert-Interpretation*, Siegfried Sassoon wrote:

*The audience pricks an intellectual Ear . . .
Stravinsky . . . Quite the Concert of the Year !
Forgetting now that none-so-distant date
When they (or folk facsimilar in state
Of mind) first heard with hisses—hoots—guffaws—
This abstract Symphony. . . .*

*Bassoons begin . . . Sonority envelops
Our auditory innocence; and brings
To me, I must admit, some drift of things
Omnific, seminal, and adolescent.
Polyphony through dissonance develops
A serpent-conscious Eden, crude but pleasant. . . .*

*This matter is most indelicate indeed!
Yet one perceives no symptom of stampede.
. . . Peace prevails along the line.
And in the Gallery, cargoed to capacity,
No tremor bodes eruptions and alarms.
They are listening to this not-quite-new audacity
As though it were by someone dead,—like Brahms.*

*But savagery pervades Me; I am frantic
With corybantic rupturing of laws.
Come, dance, and seize this clamorous chance to function
Creatively,—abandoning compunction
In anti-social rhapsodic applause!
Lynch the conductor! Jugulate the drums!
Butcher the brass! Ensanguinate the strings!
Throttle the flutes! . . . Stravinsky's April comes
With pitiless pomp and pain of sacred springs . . .
Incendiarize the Hall with resinous fires
Of sacrificial fiddles scorched and snapping! . . .*

*Meanwhile the music blazes and expires;
And the delighted Audience is clapping.*

This score is certainly one of the landmarks of musical history. It is conceived on a grand scale and, with the exception of one or two passages in the middle of the Second Part where inspiration seems momentarily to flag, the original conception is carried through with intrepid energy, originality and logic. It is the first of Stravinsky's works to be definitely ahead of its time; and although, as the sequel will show, he failed to press his advantage and gradually retreated from the position he had stormed, it has had an appreciable

and continuing influence on other composers. Debussy, who played through the piano duet version with Stravinsky some months before the first performance, had no doubts about its importance and validity; and works so diverse as Serge Prokofiev's *Scythian Suite*, *Ala and Lolly*, John Ireland's *Ballade for piano* and Bela Bartok's 4th String Quartet have been partly inspired by it. To the end of his life Diaghilev never lost his belief in it. Writing to a friend in July, 1929, he said: 'Yesterday *The Rite of Spring* proved a tremendous success. At last these fools have got to understanding it. *The Times* says that *The Rite* is to the twentieth century what Beethoven's Ninth was to the nineteenth! At last! Yes, one has to learn to be patient and philosophical, even to rise above the obstacles that puny, narrow-minded men set in the way of whatever seeks to depart from mediocrity. Heavens, all this is as trite as can be—but what's one to do? One can't go on living without some hope of seeing "in the dawn the rays of tomorrow's sun".'

6

'The Nightingale'

A few days after the first performance of *The Rite of Spring* and his nocturnal drive in the Bois de Boulogne, Stravinsky fell ill with typhoid fever and had to spend six weeks in a nursing home at Neuilly before returning to Ustilug. This meant that he was unable to attend subsequent performances of *The Rite* or to see the revival of Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina* on which he and Ravel had collaborated. Diaghilev, being dissatisfied with Rimsky-Korsakov's adaptation, had invited Stravinsky and Ravel to orchestrate such parts of the opera as had not been orchestrated by the composer; and to Stravinsky fell also the task of writing the final chorus of Act V, for which Mussorgsky had merely indicated the theme—an authentic Russian song. The version as finally presented was an unhappy mixture of Mussorgsky's original score, Rimsky-Korsakov's adaptation and the new trimmings devised by Stravinsky and Ravel; and, in thinking things over afterwards, Stravinsky was certainly rather uneasy about the part he had played. Writing twenty-two years later, he said: 'I have always been sincerely opposed to the re-arrangement of an existing work by anyone other than the author himself, and my opposition is only strengthened when the original author is an artist as conscious and certain of what he was doing as Mussorgsky. To my mind this principle is as badly violated

in the Diaghilev compilation as in Rimsky-Korsakov's "Meyerbeerisation" of *Boris Godunov*. Presumably some special form of dispensation was operative when he decided to adapt original material by Pergolesi and Chaikovsky for two of his later ballets; but in the case of *Pulcinella* and *The Fairy's Kiss*, he was dealing, not with an existing work like *Khovanshchina*, but with a number of short instrumental pieces, songs and fragments, out of which he had to create two full-scale ballets.

During his illness that summer, Diaghilev called nearly every day at the Neuilly nursing home, but never actually entered the sick-room, so great was his fear of infection. Other regular visitors included many of the musical friends Stravinsky had made in Paris during the last three years, such as Debussy, de Falla, Casella, Maurice Delage, Florent Schmitt and Ravel. To these last three, he dedicated his next work: *Three Japanese Lyrics* for soprano, two flutes, two clarinets, piano and string quartet. *Akahito*, the first of these lyrics, had been composed the previous year; *Mazatsumi* and *Tsaraiuki* were written at Ustilug during his convalescence there in the late summer of 1913: together these three miniatures celebrate the coming of spring in the island of cherry blossom and form a striking though delicate contrast to the recent evocation of the sombre spring rites of pagan Russia. Shortly afterwards he completed *Three Little Songs* (Memories of his Childhood) for voice and piano, which he dedicated to his three children. Each of these six songs is a model of brevity and concision, as is naturally appropriate in setting terse Japanese haikais or nursery jingles. The vocal line is simple: in the *Japanese Lyrics*, though chromatic in character, it proceeds regularly and smoothly by intervals that rarely expand or contract far beyond a third, while the tunes in the *Memories of Childhood* are gaily diatonic, being based on themes he had used for improvisation in earlier years. The accompaniments of two of these songs are closely related to *The Rite of Spring*: that of *Akahito* resembles the opening theme of Spring Dances, and the third of the Little Songs (*Caw, Caw, Jackdaw!*) recalls the clashes between rival chord sequences that occur later in the same movement. In *Mazatsumi*, the baroque extension of the instrumental parts by means of *arpeggi*, runs and trills provides a foretaste of what was to develop into a highly sophisticated musical system in the second act of *The Nightingale*. The last of the *Japanese Lyrics*, *Tsaraiuki*, is of special interest, since it shows definite traces of Schönberg's influence.

It has been shown how Stravinsky as a student learnt many tricks of his trade from Glazunov and Rimsky-Korsakov; and there were

moments in 1908 and 1909 when the first act of *The Nightingale* and the Dances of the Fire Bird showed signs that he was dallying with the allurements of Scriabin's debilitating harmonic scheme. About the same time there were occasional passages in his music that smacked of Debussy and Ravel. Now, for a brief moment, it was the turn of Schönberg. Egon Wellesz suggests that Stravinsky may have had Schönberg's Three Pieces for Piano (op. 11) with him when he started to compose *The Rite of Spring*; and it is on record that the two composers met in Berlin in 1912, when Stravinsky heard a performance of *Pierrot Lunaire*. Though repelled by the faded *fin-de-siècle* mood of these three-times-seven poems from Albert Giraud's *Pierrot Lunaire* sequence, he was undoubtedly impressed by the novelty of Schönberg's atonal (or, more correctly, atonical) system and by the unique instrumentation for voice (*Sprechstimme*), piano, flute, clarinet, violin and 'cello. The scoring of the *Three Japanese Lyrics* (and later of *The Soldier's Tale*) and the harmonic scheme of *Tsaraiuki* and the second and third acts of *The Nightingale* represent the points nearest to Schönberg that Stravinsky reached in his development. Thereafter their two paths rapidly diverged; and Stravinsky, fully grown in musical stature, might look to past composers for inspiration, but rarely again to one of his contemporaries.

He returned to Clarens in the autumn of 1913 without any clear idea of what his next major work was to be. There was some talk at this time of an idea that Cocteau had for a new ballet to be entitled *David*. The scene was to be a fair; and outside one of the booths an acrobat was to parade up and down, while a clown vaunted the prowess of David through a megaphone and tried to entice the public to see the show inside. The plan came to nothing; but three years later Cocteau used a similar idea as the basis of his ballet *Parade*.

Meanwhile, Stravinsky had received from the newly founded Free Theatre of Moscow a request to complete his opera, *The Nightingale*. Not unnaturally he was dubious whether he ought to accept or not. The first act had been completed more than four years ago; and since then his musical language had developed out of all recognition. Fearing the subsequent acts would be in a completely different style, he suggested to the directors that they should present Act I by itself as an independent lyrical scene: but they refused, and in the end he agreed to complete the opera as they wished. His apology for this course should be told in his own words: 'As there is no action until the second act, I told myself it would not be unreasonable if the music of the Prologue (i.e. Act I) bore a

somewhat different character from that of the rest. And, indeed, the forest with its nightingale, the pure soul of the child who falls in love with its song—all this gentle poetry of Hans Andersen's could not be expressed in the same way as the baroque luxury of the Chinese court, with its bizarre etiquette, its palace fêtes, its thousands of little bells and lanterns, and the grotesque humming of the mechanical Japanese nightingale. . . . In short, all this exotic fantasy obviously demanded a different musical idiom.' He accordingly worked on the score at Clarens and later at Leysin, where he had moved for the sake of his wife's health, and finished it in the spring of 1914.

The second act opens with the 'Draughts' entr'acte¹ sung and danced by the chorus in front of net curtains, which part to reveal the interior of the Emperor's palace of porcelain lit by thousands of torches and lanterns and decorated with tinkling flowers for a fête. The Emperor is carried in, seated in his baldaquin (Chinese March). The nightingale sings; three Japanese envoys arrive with the mechanical nightingale, which is wound up and plays; and the Emperor, on discovering that the real nightingale has disappeared, shows his displeasure by banishing it from his empire. The third act follows without break. The Emperor lies ill in his chamber. Death, wearing the Emperor's crown and holding his sword and banner, is seated by his bedside, accompanied by a chorus of lurking spectres who represent the Emperor's good and bad deeds. The nightingale returns and by its singing redeems the banner, the sword and the crown. Death and the spectres depart; and the Emperor, now restored to health, confronts his astonished courtiers in the full splendour of his ceremonial robes.

Apart from the original fisherman's song, which is used to frame all three acts, the only thing that Stravinsky took over from the Prologue was a motif belonging to the Chamberlain. All the rest of the musical material was new. For the ceremonial of the Chinese court—particularly the 'Draughts' entr'acte, the Chinese March, and the Funeral Procession at the end of Act III—he adopted the Chinese pentatonic scale, sometimes but not invariably in its black note form; but its complete absence of semitones did not altogether suit his mood, and it is occasionally shadowed by a lower scale, the consecutive notes of which are alternately at the distance of a major or minor seventh from the pentatonic scale. For instance, with the black note scale of F sharp, G sharp, A sharp, C sharp, D sharp, the shadow scale can be written as G, A sharp, B, D sharp, E, and if

¹ Cf. p. 21 above.

treated as a chord, can be regarded as the first inversion of E minor with A sharp and D sharp as lower acciaccaturas; or it can be written as G, B flat, C flat, E flat, F flat, in which case the implied chord is the first inversion of E flat major with C flat and F flat as upper acciaccaturas. The close relationship of this harmonic scheme with the bitonalism of *The Rite of Spring* will be immediately apparent. Although Stravinsky did not erect this shadow scale (which appears most clearly in the cadenza at the end of the Chinese March) into a definite musical system, he followed up at least two of its cues: many of the chords he uses carry with them a halo of upper or lower acciaccaturas; and the nightingale's vocal line, with all its lovely *melismata*, is mainly built up round a series of interlinking major and minor thirds.

The musical episodes are often anchored by a strong pedal bass. In the Chinese March, this is composed for the most part of superimposed fifths, which at one point¹ are piled up to dizzy heights. Similarly the bass of the fisherman's song, when it reappears at the end of Acts II and III, consists of two superimposed fifths. This device helps to confirm the tonality of an episode; but at the same time its effect is to blunt the force of the tonic by the presence of the supertonic and that of the dominant by the obstinacy of the tonic. In other parts of the opera where the tonality is vaguer and more abstract (particularly Act III), the interval of the fifth seems to be discarded in favour of the fourth. When the Nightingale sings to Death of his garden, the churchyard, 'where the white roses grow, where the alder blossom smells sweet, and where the fresh grass is moistened by the tears of survivors',² her song is accompanied by variations on an *arpeggio* formed of superimposed fourths. Such devices in *The Nightingale* take the place of the more extended *ostinati* of *The Rite of Spring*.

There are no rhythmical innovations in the score. Although in the ceremonial music (such as the 'Draughts' entr'acte, Chinese March, Song of the Mechanical Nightingale and Funeral Procession) Stravinsky is characteristically preoccupied with the importance of maintaining an unswerving metrical pulse, the intimate lyrical passages (such as the whole of the trio between the Emperor, Death and the Nightingale in Act III) have a much more elastic texture, and he allows the voices a considerable measure of freedom. Syncopation is almost entirely absent; changes of time signature are not unusually frequent; the melodic line tends to fall into regular phrases, four bars square; and the resulting formalism brings *The*

¹ Section 77.

² Sections 117, 123, 124 *bis*, and 125.

Nightingale much nearer to *The Fire Bird* or *Petrushka* than *The Rite of Spring*.

The orchestration underlines the bizarre artificiality of the setting by every means, natural or perverse. Unusual instrumental registers are exploited; there is double-tonguing and flutter-tonguing for the flutes; the brass is frequently muted; extended use is made of the percussion department.

The final result, alas! was not completely satisfactory. Do what he might to convince himself that the palace scenes needed a more artificial and exotic musical treatment than the scene on the edge of the forest by the seashore, Stravinsky could not alter the fundamental fact that the *Nightingale* that appeared in the moonlight and sang to the fisherman and the kitchen girl in Act I was a completely different bird from the one that so charmed the Emperor of China in Act II that 'the tears ran down over his cheeks'. The truth is that his idiom in Act I belongs to the established romantic tradition of the late nineteenth century, whereas in the rest of the opera he shows himself to be in the vanguard of the twentieth century musical explorers. Nevertheless, the opera, though disappointing as a whole, has very attractive moments. The musical *chinoiserie* of the court ceremonial scenes is a *tour de force* in its tortured baroque way; and there is an unforgettably attenuated beauty about the songs of the *Nightingale*, which represent the most serene and spiritual point reached by Stravinsky before his *Apollo Musagetes* and *Symphony of Psalms*.

Quite apart from questions of style, Stravinsky had serious doubts about the esthetics of the work. According to M. D. Calvocoressi, the composition of this opera led him to feel that 'he could write music to words or music to action, but that the co-operation of music with both words and action was clearly becoming more inadmissible to his mind'. It will accordingly be found that, with the unique exception of *Mavra*, all his later vocal works for the stage follow the rule of either separating the singers from the actors (or dancers) or, as in the case of *Oedipus Rex*, giving the singers the minimum of action and treating them almost as if they were living statues.

In the end, *The Nightingale* was produced, not by the Moscow Free Theatre which had collapsed before the opera could be finished, but by Diaghilev's Company at the Paris Opera House on May 26, 1914. Monteux conducted; Romanov was responsible for the movements of the *corps de ballet*; and the lavish settings and costumes had been designed by Benois. No pains had been spared to

make the production as spectacular as possible. In his *Reminiscences*, Benois described the amazing effect of the Chinese March in Act II. 'As the procession appeared from the wings, each link made two rounds of the stage and sank down on the floor within the space lit up with lanterns, thus forming a gorgeous and motley carpet of living flowers who emphasised by their movements the principal points of the action. In the light of the huge blue lanterns the fantastic costumes stood out vividly against the background of white and blue china columns, and when the Emperor, sparkling with gold and jewels, stepped forward from under his gigantic umbrella and the crowd fell down to worship him, the effect was so great that for the first time in my life I felt genuinely moved by my own creation.'

The opera was given twice in Paris, and four times the following month in London at Drury Lane with Emile Cooper as conductor. It was never revived in its original form, for the greater part of the costumes and settings perished in the cellars of Drury Lane during the 1914-18 war.

Stravinsky, who had just moved with his family to Salvan in Switzerland, attended some of the London performances. During this (his first) visit to England, the idea came to him of composing a '*grand divertissement*, or rather a cantata, depicting peasant nuptials'. After returning to Salvan, he decided to make a short visit to Russia. A few days at Ustilug and Kiev gave him the chance of securing much useful material for this composition. At Kiev he picked up a copy of the volume in Peter Kirieievsky's Collection of Popular Poems¹ devoted to marriage songs; and he arranged for various books, including Sakharov's Collection and Dal's Dictionary of Russian Phrases, to be sent him from his father's library. A fortnight after his return to Switzerland via Warsaw, Berlin and Basle, war broke out. Thenceforward, he and his family were to live in exile, completely cut off from their native country.

¹ *Sobrannye Piesni*, Moscow, 10 vols., 1868-74.

INTERLUDE I

Stretched Metre

IT WAS the dynamic verve of Stravinsky's early works, particularly in fast movements like the Infernal Dance in *The Fire Bird* and the Ritual Dance in *The Rite of Spring*, that most impressed critics before the first World War and swept the public off its feet. Any analysis of this quality is bound to take into account the composer's use of rhythm and the relation of rhythm to metre; and as there is considerable laxity in the use of the word 'rhythm'—a laxity apparently justified by common usage—it is perhaps advisable to attempt some sort of definition.

It is suggested that rhythm in the temporal arts—i.e. in the arts of music, literature and drama, where the passage of time plays an essential part in the artist's deployment of his material—is a natural movement (like a wave motion) mounted on a given mathematical framework or metre. Rhythm in art is something so organic and depends so much on human agency for execution that it cannot be reduced to a formula in the way metre can. Metre, with its grouping of strong and weak accents into feet and bars, of feet and bars into lines and phrases, of lines and phrases into stanzas or verse paragraphs and musical episodes or movements, is a matter of employing a number of regular recognised formulas, each of which is established by repetition and, once established, continues automatically until a change of feeling or some other reason induces a change of metre.

On the whole, music is perhaps more varied and subtle in metre than poetry. For instance, music finds it easier systematically to regulate rates of speed, pauses, and the comparative length of different notes,¹ which is quite a different matter from their accentuation. This difference between the two arts may be partly due to the growing atrophy of the auditory sense in literature brought about by the popularisation of the printed word during the last few centuries; but both arts depend ultimately for their main metrical effects on the choice of duple or triple time, or trochaic or dactylic feet—for the characteristic English verse foot is the trochee, not the

¹ In his preface to the libretto of *The Rape of Lucretia*, Benjamin Britten suggests that one of the attractions for a poet when collaborating with an opera composer should be the fact that 'the timings and inflections of the dialogue can be fixed exactly and forever—a thing not possible in any other medium'.

iambus, generally with anacrusis at the beginning of the line and an abbreviated masculine foot at the end.

As can be seen from movements like the Dance of the Fire Bird and the Russian Dance in *Petrushka*, Stravinsky's early interests were concentrated on the maintenance of a regular beat or pulse, which would be disturbed as little as possible by acceleration or retardation, while the metrical pattern remained comparatively constant. With *The Rite of Spring*, however, a desire for syncopation led him to experiment with the displacement of accents; and the result, as in the Ritual Dance, is that a considerable strain is put on the accepted system of musical notation and there is a bewildering number of changes of time signature. This process is akin to the metrical experiments described by Gerard Manley Hopkins in the 1883 Preface to his Poems and there rather misleadingly called Counterpoint Rhythm. It implies either a brief reversal of the basic metre which is corrected before it can undermine the basic metre's authority, or an extension of a simple into a compound metre (admixture of duple and triple time) with occasional reversals of the compound metre. These experiments with 'stretched metre' continue for the whole of Stravinsky's so-called 'Russian period'—that is to say, up to and including *The Soldier's Tale* and the Symphonies of Wind Instruments—and are allied with an attempt to break down the conventional idea of the symmetrical grouping of phrases. It is as if a poet, who had inherited a tradition of writing in ballad metre, were to vary his verse form by experimenting first with a more complicated but still regular stanza (like the Spenserian stanza) and then with a sequence of irregular stanzas (like Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*). But by the beginning of the nineteen-twenties Stravinsky seems to have exhausted his fit of metrical exasperation, and steadier, simpler metres return.

It must be admitted that this preoccupation with variable metre tends to make the rhythm of his music somewhat mechanical, and his insistence on a metronomic rigidity in performance occasionally leads to the loss of some of those imponderable rhythmic subtleties that ultimately depend on the good musicianship of performer or conductor, e.g. anacrusis before an important accent, the indefinable lilt that brings a phrase to life, and the compensatory swing with which phrase follows and responds to phrase. But, thanks to his innate feeling for sound construction, the rhythmic flow between the larger sections of his major works is nearly always instinctively right; and in his later compositions it will be found that he achieves a more generally satisfactory synthesis of metre and rhythm.

CHAPTER III
EXILE
(VAUD, 1914-1920)

7

‘Reynard’

AMONG STRAVINSKY’S neighbours on the shores of Lake Geneva were Ernest Ansermet, the conductor, and C. F. Ramuz, the author. During the next few years their company and friendship became precious to him and did much to relieve the anxieties and strain caused by the first World War.

Ansermet, who was his junior by one year, had formerly been professor of mathematics at Lausanne University; but his innate interest in music and an intensive study of counterpoint and composition led him to decide to take up the career of a conductor, and early in 1914 he took charge of the Casino concerts at Montreux. He already knew Stravinsky at this date and admired his music; and one of his first acts at Montreux was to invite him to attend a rehearsal of the Casino Orchestra to conduct his Symphony in E flat (April, 1914).

It was at La Pervenche, Ansermet’s house at Clarens, that Stravinsky heard of the declaration of war. He was then still living at Salvan and had just finished a group of three short pieces for string quartet. These pieces, which are dedicated to Ansermet, appear at first sight to be essays in absolute music—the first he had attempted since the Piano Studies of 1908—and as such they are somewhat disconcerting. In particular, the wilful fragmentation of the second piece and its tiresome instructions to second violin and viola to reverse their instruments and hold them like a ‘cello in order to play three notes pizzicato have provoked the wrath of critics. In *The New Music* (1924) Sir George Dyson, after quoting four bars of this movement, cries, ‘If this type of passage has any proper place in the art of the string quartet, then the end is near’. Stravinsky himself seems to have had second thoughts about these pieces, for in 1918 he orchestrated the first two, and in 1929 all three appeared in a new guise as the first three of his Four Studies for Orchestra with titles—1. *Dance*, 2. *Eccentric*, 3. *Canticle*—which emphasised their contrasting popular, fantastic and liturgical moods. Whether they

are presented as pieces for string quartet or studies for orchestra, perhaps it is only fair to regard them as fragments from the composer's notebooks—partly digested material that was later to be used in different contexts and brought to a state of greater maturity. For instance, the four-note tune of the *Dance* blossoms into the main theme of the last movement of the Symphony in C (1940); the phrase played by the first violin in the 13th bar of *Eccentric* appears slightly transformed as the subject of the opening fugue in the second movement of the Symphony of Psalms (1930); and the main idea of the *Canticle*, which is a brief chorale, is more fully worked out in the coda to the Symphonies of Wind Instruments (1920).

For the first few years of the war, however, vocal music was to be Stravinsky's main preoccupation. He quarried his texts from the various collections of Russian folk-lore in his library, ignoring differences of region and period and perfecting a kind of eclectic pan-Russian 'dialect'. By his own admission, he was attracted, not so much by the stories themselves or their images and metaphors, as by the sequence of words and syllables and their varied cadences, 'which produce an effect on one's sensibility very closely akin to that of music'. Synthetic texts of this kind were prepared for two major works, *Reynard* and *The Wedding* (often referred to in England by its French title *Les Noces*), and for various groups of songs—the *Pribautki* (or song games), the *Cat's Cradle Songs*, the Three Tales for Children, the Four Russian Songs, and the four Russian peasant choruses sometimes known as *Saucers*.

To set this material, he devised a predominantly monodic style based on a similar synthesis of Russian folk-song. The works of this period may therefore be said to derive from the Three Little Songs of 1913 rather than from the *Japanese Lyrics* or the later acts of *The Nightingale*. Their melodies are fundamentally diatonic and simple in outline, though in declamatory passages they often blossom into *fioriture*. The accompaniments are designed to make the vocal line stand out in sharp relief. This is done, partly by careful contrast of instrumental timbres, and partly by frequent applications of major or minor seconds, sevenths and ninths. The insistence on an unswerving metrical pulse, the repetition of simple or cumulative patterns, the use of ellipsis to effect foreshortening and syncopation—all these devices combine to create the impression of a musical machine that, once set in motion, is bound to run its inevitable course.

The four *Pribautki* for voice, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola, 'cello and double-bass were written while Stravinsky

was still at Salvan. They are dedicated to his wife and reveal a hitherto unsuspected musical sense of humour. In the autumn of 1914 he returned to Clarens, where he rented La Pervenche which Ansermet had just vacated and started to compose *The Wedding*. During the winter he paid a fortnight's visit to Diaghilev at Florence and on his return to Switzerland decided to take his wife to the Château d'Oex for a cure. His stay there was broken by another journey to Italy—this time to Rome, where Diaghilev had rented a furnished apartment. He took with him a new composition, Three Pieces for Piano Duet (with easy left hand), consisting of March, Waltz and Polka, dedicated respectively to Casella, Satie and Diaghilev himself; and while in Rome, he invited Diaghilev to play them with him. On reaching the final piece, he explained that in composing it he had thought of his friend 'as a circus ring-master in evening dress and top hat, cracking his whip and urging on a rider'. The great impresario was at first somewhat taken aback, uncertain whether he ought to be offended or not; but finally he saw the humorous side of it and enjoyed the joke. During this visit Stravinsky met for the first time Gerald Tyrwhitt (later Lord Berners) and also Serge Prokofiev. At the end of a fortnight's stay he returned to the Château d'Oex where he hired a room outside the hotel and, after installing a piano in it, continued working on *The Wedding*. At the same time he composed a duet between a cat and a goat, which was later to form part of *Reynard*.¹ In the early spring he brought his family back to Clarens and shortly afterwards moved to the Villa Rogivue at Morges.

About this time Diaghilev came to Switzerland and settled at Bellerive, Ouchy, where he was surrounded by a little group of artists whom he had managed to collect together for his approaching ballet season at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. These included the dancer Massine, the painters Bakst, Larionov and Goncharova, and Cecchetti the famous old dancing master. Ansermet, who had just succeeded Stavenhagen at Geneva, had been appointed conductor of the orchestra. Unfortunately, Stravinsky and Diaghilev were unable to meet for some weeks owing to the fact that Stravinsky's younger daughter had caught measles. When the period of quarantine was over, Diaghilev was rewarded for his patience by having the first two tableaux of *The Wedding* played to him. 'He was so moved,' writes Stravinsky, 'and his enthusiasm seemed so genuine and touching that I could not do otherwise than dedicate the work to him.' Such a gesture naturally helped to clear

¹ Section 62 *et seq.*

up any misunderstanding that might have been caused by the Polka.

At the same time a new ballet was discussed, to be entitled *Liturgie*. This was to be based on the Passion and danced without music, but to have interval music composed by Stravinsky. Goncharova designed a number of costumes for it; but the project was never carried out.

Before leaving for the United States, the Company held two Red Cross gala performances—one at Geneva and one at Paris—at which Massine's first ballet, *The Midnight Sun*, was given for the first time. It was arranged that Stravinsky should conduct *The Fire Bird* in both programmes—the concert suite at Geneva and the ballet in Paris. These were his first public appearances as a conductor; and he not unnaturally hoped that, when the company appeared in New York, he would be invited by the Metropolitan to conduct his own ballets there. But in the absence of a definite contract, he refused to sail with Diaghilev and the rest of the company.

During his stay in Paris, he visited his friend the Princess Edmond de Polignac, who writes in her *Memoirs*: 'My intention at that time was to ask different composers to write short works for me for small orchestra of about twenty performers. I had the impression that, after Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss, the days of big orchestras were over and that it would be delightful to return to a small orchestra of well chosen players and instruments.' In answer to her proposal, Stravinsky suggested *Reynard*, which had already been roughly sketched out at the Château d'Oex. This was agreed; and on his return to Morges, he set to work on its composition, for the time being abandoning *The Wedding*, which was almost half completed.

Shortly afterwards, he received a visit from Nijinsky and his wife, Romola, whom he had not met before. Largely owing to the good offices of Diaghilev, they had just been released from internment in Hungary and were passing through Switzerland on their way to join the Russian Ballet in New York. Stravinsky at that moment was entering on a period of financial embarrassment. He was almost completely cut off from his private family resources in Russia; the restricted activity of the Russian Ballet had led to a considerable reduction in his royalties; and his publishing house, the Russischer Musik Verlag, whose headquarters were in Leipzig, had temporarily ceased to print and distribute his works. It is in the light of these circumstances that Romola Nijinsky's account of their meeting should be read—an account which, though possibly biased and

inaccurate, nevertheless gives a vivid picture of Stravinsky at this time.

She writes: 'As soon as Stravinsky heard of our arrival, he came over to Lausanne and took possession of Vaslav. I only knew him by sight—now I made his acquaintance. He was dressed like a dandy, with the most indescribable taste. He thought it was very chic, and there was something touching in his naïvety and conceit. He seemed extremely sure of himself and was fully convinced of his genius, which he undoubtedly had, but the way he spoke of it seemed rather childish and at the same time charming. One would have thought a man as great as he would have been more dignified.

'When he came to see Vaslav, he was extremely courteous to me. . . . He immediately made friends with Kyra. He was a father and rather an expert in handling children. We went around Lausanne to the different cafés with Stravinsky as our guide. Vaslav was like a boy of seven; at last he was with a friend, a fellow artist, somebody to whom he could speak the same language, somebody who understood him fully and completely.

'Stravinsky asked us to come and see him at his house at Morges. We went to his house, which was near the lake and faced the Mont Blanc, but in spite of this it was Russia. The arrangement of the rooms, the furniture—a simple furnished villa, but somehow Stravinsky and his wife had transformed it into a place near Moskva. The walls were hung with drawings by his elder son, who had already proved himself a possessor of talent. The wife was a real Russian woman, a devoted wife and mother. She embroidered, knitted and painted beautifully. In her great simplicity there was the strength of one who devoted herself—her life and personality—to the genius of another. She was the ideal wife for a great artist.'

The discussion turned to music and Stravinsky's latest compositions—presumably *Reynard* and *The Wedding*. Romola Nijinsky continues: 'He spoke to Vaslav for hours of his plans, his compositions, the ideas of Diaghilev, his injustices; the torrent of his words never seemed to stop. He tried to assure himself he was independent of Diaghilev. "I am a composer, and sooner or later people will realise the value of my music. Of course, Serge Pavlovich is a great help, and especially now that the war is on. In Russia, anyhow, it is impossible to be played, when one has modern ideas. He can't crush me. . . ." ' Nijinsky's presence was too good an opportunity to be lost; and Stravinsky tried to enlist the dancer's aid in securing his engagement as conductor in New York. 'He insisted that if Vaslav was a real friend, he would make it a condition to go to

America only if Stravinsky was asked also. I thought this was rather stretching the bonds of friendship. Stravinsky talked, raged and cried; he paced up and down the room cursing Diaghilev: "He thinks he is the Russian Ballet himself. Our success has gone to his head. What would he be without us, without Bakst, Benois, you, myself? Vaslav, I count on you." The two departed to the post office, filled with the decision to counteract this new outrage. Luckily they could not write in English, and I was summoned to help them out. I was able to translate their rather violently worded cable to Otto H. Kahn into a politely worded request. The hoped-for invitation for Stravinsky did not arrive, and we had to leave for Paris.'

Here is Stravinsky's own comment on this episode: 'In my ingenuousness I begged Nijinsky to make his own participation in the performances depend on my engagement. Needless to say, nothing came of it. As for Diaghilev, I learned later that he was much distressed at being unable to get the Metropolitan to engage me, as he had confidently counted upon it and it was no less important to him than to me.'

When Stravinsky resumed his work on *Reynard*, it became clear that he needed a reliable collaborator for the French translation of the libretto, and also for the words of *The Wedding* cantata and the various groups of songs that were then partly written and partly planned. Sometime previously, Ansermet had introduced him to the Swiss author, C. F. Ramuz, who was living just outside Lausanne. Himself the descendant of peasants and vine-growers in the canton of Vaud, Ramuz immediately welcomed Stravinsky, not so much as a foreign composer of international repute, as a man of percipience who recognised and loved the significance and beauty of the ordinary things of life. His book, *Souvenirs sur Igor Strawinsky* (1929), is a touching record of their friendship, written with considerable insight: a worthy tribute by one great artist to another. In it Ramuz has tried to define the reasons for this innate sympathy between them. 'What I perceived in you was an appetite and feeling for life, a love of all that is living; and that for you all that is living is potentially music. . . . Our similarity of tastes gave me the right to enjoy a music, which I saw was situated for you first in material things and then came into existence within your mind, entering through all the inlets of the body: touch, taste, smell, sight and all the open and docile senses.' The live reactions of a foreigner to the common things of life were all the dearer to Ramuz, because his own artistic vision had to contend with the stifling prejudices of the Swiss middle classes before it could break free. 'It was always to the significant,

the true and the authentic,' he writes, 'that you instinctively turned, and always to the raw materials of life, the things that were unclassified, unperceived and disapproved of—particularly by our own little native community.'

The two artists collaborated closely on the French text of *Reynard*. Ramuz describes these sessions as follows: 'We met almost daily in the blue room which dominated the garden, surrounded by side drums, kettle drums, bass drums and every kind of percussion instrument. . . . The wall paper was an extraordinary blue—that of a laundry blue bag; we occupied the interior of a cube which seemed to have been hewn out of a glacier. Below was an attractive fruit garden with a lawn and flowering trees where four fine children laughed and played all day long. About five o'clock we were served with strong black coffee, fresh bread and various jams. I had a sheet of paper and a pencil. Stravinsky would read me the Russian text verse by verse, taking care each time to count the number of syllables which I noted down on the margin of my sheet of paper and then made the translation—that is to say, Stravinsky translated the text for me word by word. . . . Then came the question of quantities (longs and shorts); vowels (one note was intended for an o, another for an a, a third for an i); finally, and above all, came the well known and insoluble problem of the tonic accent and its coincidence (or non-coincidence) with the musical accent.' It was soon agreed between them that there would be no hard and fast rules, but that each difficulty would be treated on its merits. After a good dinner (in the Russian style) at La Rogivue, Ramuz would return to Lausanne by the last train with his notebook crammed with notes, hints and indications to help him in working out the French version.

When the translation was finished, Stravinsky copied it in red ink into his manuscript score, which was itself (according to Ramuz) a work of art. In his *Souvenirs* he writes: 'Stravinsky's scores are magnificent. He is above all (in all matters and in every sense of the word) a calligrapher. . . . His writing desk resembled a surgeon's instrument case. Bottles of different coloured inks in their ordered hierarchy had each a separate part to play in the ordering of his art. Nearby were india-rubbers of various kinds and shapes and all sorts of glittering steel implements: rulers, erasers, pen-knives and a roulette instrument for drawing staves invented by Stravinsky himself. One was reminded of the definition of St. Thomas: beauty is the splendour of order. All the large pages of the score were filled with writing with the help of different coloured inks—blue, green, red, two kinds of black (ordinary and Chinese), each having its

purpose, its meaning, its special use: one for the notes, another the text, a third the translation; one for titles, another for the musical directions; meanwhile the bar lines were ruled and the mistakes carefully erased.' In this way the score of *Reynard* was completed.

The work is styled a burlesque story in song and dance, adapted from Russian folk tales for the stage. It is written for chamber orchestra consisting of flute (doubling the piccolo), cor anglais (oboe), clarinet in E flat (clarinet in B flat), bassoon, two horns, trumpet, cimbalom, timpani, cymbals, bass drum, two tambourines (one with and the other without jingles), side drum, triangle and string quintet. (The cimbalom was a new discovery of Stravinsky's. He had recently heard one played by Aladar Racz in a Genevese restaurant and was so enchanted by its tone and technique that he immediately bought an instrument for his own use and taught himself to play it.)

In a note prefixed to the score, Stravinsky says: '*Reynard* is to be played by clowns, dancers or acrobats, preferably on a trestle stage with the orchestra placed behind. If produced in a theatre, it should be played in front of the curtain. The players do not leave the stage. They enter together to the accompaniment of the little march that serves as introduction, and their exeunt is managed in the same way. The roles are dumb. The voices (two tenors and two basses) are in the orchestra.' It will be seen that he had not forgotten the lesson learnt at the time of completing *The Nightingale*. This divorce between song and action meant that the choreographer would be only loosely tied to the libretto and, provided his interpretation did not actually contradict the story, free to develop the visual part of the entertainment on whatever lines he wished.

In any case the plot of *Reynard* is comparatively unimportant: The cock, strutting up and down his perch, is exhorted by the fox to come down to earth. Ultimately, persuaded against his better judgment, he leaps from his perch—the passage is marked *salto mortale* in the score—and is seized by the fox. Suddenly the cat and goat appear, rescue the cock and dance together in triumph. The action is then repeated *da capo* with slight variations, but this time the cat and goat catch the fox by his tail and strangle him. The burlesque ends with a hint of the old mummers' *quête*:

*If you've enjoyed the tale of the Fox,
Drop your pennies in the box!*

The score is a beautifully homogeneous work on a miniature scale. The music, as is appropriate to the subject, has an almost sub-



PETRUSHKA: Benois's design for the Ballerina in the original Russian Ballet production of 1911.



THE WEDDING ('*Les Noces*'): Illuminated cover painted by Stravinsky for a folder containing MS. sketches.

М.Н. 1=56
Harp Solo

Приветствие

Ко-са-ри мои ко-са-ри-на по-са-ри

М.Н. 1=72

Ас-те-ри те-ри ко-са-ри-на по-са-ри-на. Ас-те-ри те-ри ко-са-ри-на по-са-ри-на.

Ма-ри-на по-са-ри-на. Ма-ри-на по-са-ри-на.

О-са-ри ко-са-ри-на по-са-ри-на. О-са-ри ко-са-ри-на по-са-ри-на.

①

THE WEDDING: Early MS. sketch of the opening of Tableau I (circa 1915).

Handwritten musical score for "THE WEDDING: MS sketch showing the first projected scheme of orchestration (section 17)". The score is written on multiple staves, including:

- Flute** (Fl.)
- Oboe** (Ob.)
- Clarinet** (Cl.)
- Bassoon** (Bsn.)
- Trumpet** (Timp.)
- Trombone** (Tbn.)
- Percussion** (Perc.)

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. Key annotations include:

- Gr. NO.** (Grand No.)
- Gr. Bass** (Grand Bass)
- Gr. Perc.** (Grand Percussion)
- Gr. Tbn.** (Grand Trombone)
- Gr. Tmp.** (Grand Trumpet)
- Gr. Fl.** (Grand Flute)
- Gr. Ob.** (Grand Oboe)
- Gr. Cl.** (Grand Clarinet)
- Gr. Bsn.** (Grand Bassoon)

The score is divided into sections, with the first section labeled "1" and the second section labeled "2". The notation is dense and complex, reflecting the "first projected scheme of orchestration".

THE WEDDING: MS sketch showing the first projected scheme of orchestration (section 17).

human quality. As André Schaeffner says in his excellent study, 'Stravinsky exacts from his four singers a vocal virtuosity that is often irresistibly droll: it seems as if four animals with different voices are caged together in the orchestra pit and their cries sound as if a sleeping farmyard had been disturbed at midnight.' The cymbalom, percussion and frequently plucked strings give the work a predominantly dry timbre and bouncing resonance.

Despite the conflict in its action and the dynamic pulse of its music, *Reynard* has a curiously static quality; and henceforward this will be found to be a characteristic of all Stravinsky's theatre works and one that tends to bring them closer to conditions of concert-hall performance. To quote again from Schaeffner: 'It seems that his trick of rhythmic exasperation leads ultimately to paralysis of action: just like the *aria* in Italian opera, it forces the flow of the drama to stop.' This can be clearly illustrated by comparing *Reynard* with *Peter and the Wolf* (1936), in which Prokofiev uses the same type of Russian folk story and farmyard characters, but introduces a human element and completely subordinates his music to the requirements of the action. *Peter and the Wolf* is a stage burlesque with incidental music; *Reynard* a burlesque cantata with incidental stage action: *Peter and the Wolf* is more effective in the theatre; *Reynard* more satisfying in the concert hall or studio.

One of the disadvantages of Stravinsky's method is that, although his musical intent and content may be purer than in the case of an ordinary theatre composer, he tends to work outside the generally accepted theatrical conventions with the result that, adequately to present such works on the stage, a series of awkward problems have to be solved. To take one instance: Whereas *The Fire Bird*, *Petrushka*, *The Rite of Spring* and *The Nightingale* are all written for normal though large symphony orchestra, *Reynard* and many of his subsequent theatrical works are scored for such varied combinations of instruments—often demanding a high standard of solo playing—that it is difficult and often uneconomic to assemble the musical complement required. *Reynard* itself plays a bare twenty minutes; and to fill an evening's bill, at least two other supporting works are needed, each of which will probably demand a different size of orchestra. This helps to explain why performances of Stravinsky's later stage works are spasmodic, and so few of them are included in an opera or ballet company's regular repertoire.

About the time that *Reynard* was being finished, the Princess Edmond de Polignac, to whom the work is dedicated, came to stay at Lausanne and was invited by Stravinsky to dine with his family

at La Rogivue. In her *Memoirs*, the Princess has given a charming account of the evening: 'He came to fetch me, as it was half an hour's journey by train from Lausanne to Morges. Everything was covered with snow and so quiet in the clear moonlight night, so still, that it was not very cold. I shall always remember the happy impression I had as Stravinsky took me into his house, for it looked to me like a Christmas tree, all brilliantly lit up and decorated in the warm colours that the Russian Ballet had brought to Paris.

'Madame Stravinsky was a striking figure: pale, thin, full of dignity and grace, she at once gave the impression of nobility of race and grace that was confirmed by all she did in the following years. In the warmth of her charming house she looked like a princess in a Russian fairy tale: surrounded by her delicate children, then, of course, very young. . . .

'I can never forget the delight of that evening at Morges: the table brilliantly lit with coloured candles, and covered with fruit, flowers and desserts of every hue. The supper was a wonderful example of Russian cuisine, carefully prepared by Madame Stravinsky and composed of every form of *zakusky*, then *bortsch*, tender *sterlets* covered with delicious transparent jelly and served with a perfect sauce, various dishes of fowls and every sort of sweet, making it a feast to be always remembered.'

8

'*The Wedding*'

In the spring of 1916, Diaghilev returned to Europe from the United States in an Italian ship laden with war munitions. 'I have been waiting for you like a brother,' were his first words when Stravinsky joined him in Madrid where the Russian Ballet was due to perform at the Theatre Royal. This was Stravinsky's first visit to Spain and, like Glinka and many other Russians, he discovered an instinctive liking for the country and the people and their way of living. He enjoyed the military music in the streets of Madrid, and the mechanical pianos, the *cante jondo* singers and the *toque jondo* guitarists in the midnight taverns. He visited Toledo and the Escorial, which made a deep impression on him as a 'revelation of the profoundly religious temperament of the people and the mystic fervour of their Catholicism, so closely akin in its essentials to the religious feeling and spirit of Russia'. Roland-Manuel in his study of Manuel de Falla (1930) suggests that this innate sympathy between the Spaniard and the Russian is mainly due to the fact that

fundamentally both countries are still animated by the spirit of the Middle Ages. In any case, when Stravinsky returned to Morges, he did not forget the example of Glinka's *Jota Arragonaise* and *A Summer Night at Madrid*. His own tribute took the form of a Study for Pianola (1917), which was intended to convey an almost literal impression of the capital and its taverns and the rattle of their mechanical pianos. In addition, he included an Española in the Five Easy Pieces for Piano Duet (1917); and a year later the Royal March in *The Soldier's Tale* was written as a stylised Spanish *pasodoble*.

The summer and autumn of 1916 were spent in finishing the score of *Reynard* and working on some of his shorter compositions; but just before Christmas he had a bad attack of intercostal neuralgia, as a result of which his legs were nearly paralysed. During his convalescence, Diaghilev paid him a visit and proposed that he should produce *The Nightingale* as a ballet with the singers in the orchestra. Stravinsky countered with the suggestion that the homogeneous music of the second and third acts should be turned into a symphonic poem which could be used for ballet purposes. This was agreed; and as soon as he had sufficiently recovered, he set to work to revise the scenario and re-arrange the music. This decision is interesting in the light of his later denunciation of the symphonic poem as a musical form—'since it entirely depends on elements that are extraneous to music' (*Musical Poetics*, 1939). But in the context of his Harvard lecture he was thinking mainly of Berlioz (and possibly Liszt); and once it had been decided to take his early opera, eliminate the voices and adapt the music for concert performance, it is difficult to see what other musical form would have been more appropriate.

The Song of the Nightingale (as the symphonic poem was called) is divided into three parts: 1. The Fête in the Emperor of China's Palace, 2. The Two Nightingales, 3. Illness and Recovery of the Emperor of China. The chief musical problem was to provide an instrumental equivalent for the vocal apparatus of the opera. The song of the real nightingale was entrusted, sometimes to a solo flute, sometimes to a solo violin, which meant that its range could be considerably extended. This inevitably led to a readjustment of the rest of the score, the orchestration of which was lightened in texture to enable not only solo instruments, but also groups of instruments, to be treated on *concertante* lines. An attempt to give the work a semblance of symphonic form was made by an alteration of keys and the repetition of a certain amount of material. The major portion

(sixty-five bars) of the opening section of part one (the original 'Draughts' Interlude) was repeated in the middle of the second part; and the nightingale's song to death, which occurs both in Act III of the opera and the third part of the symphonic poem, was anticipated in the second part. In the opera—presumably for vocal reasons—this song had been anchored to a single key; but in the symphonic poem it breaks free of such restriction and appears in no less than five different keys. In fact, towards the end of the work, the whole key sequence is altered, with the result that the Funeral Procession appears a semitone higher and by an abbreviation of the ensuing cadence its modulation is altered and the coda (originally the fisherman's song) falls in the key of A flat instead of C. Although the main purpose of these alterations is to emphasise the symphonic structure of the work, they cannot disguise the fact that the music's basic inspiration is lyrical and vocal. Nevertheless, the revised instrumentation is definitely successful and points the way to Stravinsky's future treatment of the symphony orchestra on chamber orchestra lines.

Work on *The Wedding* and other smaller compositions continued during the revision of *The Nightingale*; but in the spring of 1917 Stravinsky left Switzerland to join Diaghilev again—this time in Rome where the Russian Ballet was performing at the Costanzi Theatre. For the opening Red Cross gala performance, he not only conducted *The Fire Bird* and *Fireworks*, which was given with special lighting effects by the Italian futurist Balla, but also made an arrangement of the Volga Boat Song for wind instruments and percussion. This was dictated to Ansermet in Lord Berners's apartment the previous night and, the Tsar having recently abdicated, substituted for the Russian National Anthem at the actual performance. (It is of interest to note that a few weeks later in Paris—on May 11 to be exact—Diaghilev in a moment of intellectual revolutionary fervour arranged for the red flag to be displayed on the stage in the finale of *The Fire Bird*; but protests from his backers prevented this innovation from being repeated.)

It was on the occasion of this visit to Italy that Stravinsky first met Picasso.

Jean Cocteau had long wished to bring Picasso and other French painters into the Russian Ballet fold. His own voice was becoming increasingly important in Diaghilev's inner councils; and now that it had been decided to go ahead with preparations for his own ballet *Parade* to a score by Satie, he had been able to persuade Diaghilev to commission Picasso to design the scenery and costumes. So

Cocteau carried his designer off to Rome; and there, in a studio opposite the Villa Medici, Picasso started to paint the Chinaman, the Managers, the American Girl, the Horse and the two blue Acrobats, who were later to be compared by Marcel Proust to the Dioscuri. In their spare time, Cocteau, Picasso and Stravinsky explored Rome together. Later they followed the company to Naples and, while the dancers were rehearsing Massine's new ballet *The Good-Humoured Ladies*, continued their explorations, visiting the aquarium and combing the antique shops for old prints and water colours.

The meeting of Picasso and Stravinsky is of interest, not only because of its sequel—their collaboration over *Pulcinella* two years later—but also because of the many startling points of similarity between their work and careers. Both are remarkably intelligent and courageous artists. Though the roots of their music and painting have been nourished by tradition, their relentlessly enquiring minds are never content to mark time, but feel a continual urge to experiment, to explore new country and to push the boundaries of their respective arts as far into the unknown as is rationally possible. Throughout their careers they have been interested in the raw material of their arts for its intrinsic value, but not necessarily for its representational or emotional content. Many parallels can be drawn between their work—for instance, the calligraphic quality of some of Picasso's paintings and drawings can be compared with Stravinsky's strictly syllabic treatment of words in vocal settings; and there is a close relationship between Picasso's use of comparatively flat colours in his two-dimensional synthetic cubist still-lives and Stravinsky's favourite method of orchestration where solo instruments or groups of instruments are treated on *concertante* lines.

At the time of their meeting, many of these similarities were already explicit; but shortly afterwards both artists, travelling independently, were to reach a new stage of development which has been called their antique or neo-classical period. In *Oedipus Rex* and *Apollo Musagetes*, Stravinsky was to produce an almost exact counterpart in sound to the profoundly impressive classical nudes that Picasso painted between 1920 and 1923. From that moment, however, their paths appear to diverge, and nothing in Stravinsky's later output can be found to correspond with the savage denunciation of cruelty, terror and oppression contained in Picasso's *Guernica* and *The Charnel House*, even though after the German occupation of Paris certain French critics, writing of his more recent compositions, accused him of having deliberately embraced *la misère musicale*.

When Stravinsky left Italy in 1917, he had in his baggage a portrait that Picasso had drawn of him. At Chiasso, the Customs officials who examined his luggage became suspicious of this drawing and refused to let it pass. 'It's not a portrait, but a plan,' they protested; and all Stravinsky's attempts to allay their suspicions failed. He had perforce to send it, in Lord Berners's name, to the British Ambassador in Rome, who later forwarded it to Paris in the diplomatic bag.

Shortly after his return to Switzerland, he suffered two grievous losses. In the first place, his old nurse, Bertha, who had entered his parents' service before he was born and who had been living with his family in Morges, died suddenly: and not long afterwards a telegram from Russia informed him that his favourite brother Gury had died of typhus on the Rumanian front. A holiday at Les Diablerets helped him to recover from the shock; and the rest of the summer and autumn was spent in hard work. The Study for Pianola was composed—the first original work to be written for this medium. Various collections of short pieces were completed: the Five Pieces for Piano Duet with easy right hand; the Three Tales for Children (dedicated to his own children); and the four Russian Peasant Songs entitled *Saucers* because they resembled the divination songs that used to be sung in Russia at Christmastide while peasant women told fortunes from tea-leaves spilled in saucers. At the same time, in an attempt to break through the stranglehold that war conditions had imposed on the publication of his works, he arranged for some of his recent compositions—the *Pribautki*, the *Car's Cradle Songs*, the two sets of piano duets and *Reynard*—to be printed and published by Messrs. Ad. Henn, the Genevese concert agency.

(And here, a strange performance that took place in Paris earlier that year should perhaps be mentioned in parenthesis. The poet, Sébastien Voirol, had been so impressed by *The Rite of Spring* as a ballet that he devised a similar work in dance and mime to be accompanied, not by Stravinsky's score, but by a poem he had specially written for the occasion. This version of *The Rite* was produced by Mme Lara for the 'Art et Liberté' Company at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on June 3, 1917, with scenery and costumes by Martine. The complete text is not available; but the brief quotations included by André Coeuroy in his article, *Stravinsky et Nos Poètes*, which appeared in the *Revue Musicale*, Dec. 1923, are not in the least reassuring.)

All this time considerable progress had been made with the last part of *The Wedding*. Stravinsky had turned one of the attic rooms

at the Villa Mornand (to which he had recently moved from the Villa Rogivue) into a studio, which was reached by a half-hidden wooden staircase well barricaded by doors; and there he could work undisturbed on the vocal and piano score. Ramuz, who had again been enlisted to make the French translation of the Russian text, has described how of a summer afternoon the sound of the composer at his piano (and his percussion instruments, whenever a hand was disengaged!) could be heard in the little square outside, where two or three women were usually to be found sitting on a bench and knitting in the shade of the trees, and how they would raise their heads for a moment in bewilderment and then, with an indulgent '*C'est le monsieur russe!*' resume their knitting. The work was finished by the end of the year; but as it had been promised to Diaghilev and there appeared to be no possibility of its being produced until after the war, the question of its instrumentation was for the moment shelved.

Although in the published score the work is subtitled 'Russian Choreographic Scenes', it is really a cantata for choir, four soloists (soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and bass) and accompanying orchestra in four tableaux played through without interruption. The singing starts without prelude at the beginning of the work and continues unbroken until twenty-one bars before the end, when there is a brief instrumental coda. The tableaux are arranged in two parts, as follows: *Part One, Tableau One*, At the Bride's House ('The Tresses'); *Tableau Two*, At the Bridegroom's House; *Tableau Three*, The Bride's Departure; *Part Two, Tableau Four*, The Wedding Feast ('The Red Table'). There is no plot in the usual sense—in fact, Stravinsky's intention was that it should be staged as a kind of *divertissement*, a scenic ceremony in which he would make absolutely free use of both pagan and Christian elements in Russian village wedding ritual and customs—but the score carries sufficient indications to give an outline of the action.

At the beginning of the first part, the bride (Nastasia) is shown surrounded by her mother and bridesmaids who are dressing her hair, combing and plaiting it, and tying it with red and blue ribbons. They try to assuage her lamentations. Meanwhile, the bridegroom's friends are combing and anointing his hair with oil. They congratulate his parents on the match and invoke the Mother of God, the Apostles and Angels. The bridegroom (Fetis) asks a blessing from his parents. The scene changes to the bride's house. She too asks her parents' blessing and then takes her departure, followed by all the guests. The mothers of Nastasia and Fetis lament the loss of

their children. (End of Part One.) At the beginning of the second part, the backcloth rises (according to Ramuz) to reveal 'a large room in an izba filled almost entirely with a table round which the wedding guests are seated, eating and drinking. In the background, an open door leads into a bedroom with a double bed covered with a vast eiderdown'. The guests sing of white and red flowers growing side by side on a branch of a tree, while a drunken old man mumbles an unintelligible story about a gold ring with a ruby that someone has lost. Nastasia, after being presented to the company by her father, is handed over to Fetis. A married couple is chosen from among the guests to go into the bedroom and warm the bridal bed. Meanwhile, the health of the bride and bridegroom is drunk, and they embrace each other. When the two who were warming the bed return, Nastasia and Fetis are escorted to bed, and the door closed on them. The two fathers and the two mothers then seat themselves on a bench in front of the door facing the rest of the company; and from inside the bedroom the bridegroom is heard singing of his love:

*' Dear heart, sweet wife, my own;
Flower of my days, honey of my nights, flower of my life:
Let us so live together
That all men may envy us!'*

The most remarkable thing about *The Wedding* is that, despite its long period of gestation—it took Stravinsky three and a half years to compose and another five before the instrumentation was completed—it is of all his works the one that makes the greatest impression of unity. The original conception was his own; it was he who compiled and adapted the text from Kirieievsky's Collection of Popular Poems; the melodic material nearly all springs from a single cell by a process of 'budding'; and, with two brief exceptions, the whole work is geared to metronome rates of 80 and 120 to the minute. Cocteau has compared *The Wedding* to a racing car: but it is not so much its speed that impresses as the smooth and regular running of its well-oiled engine.

This extraordinary unity of conception and execution is obtained only at the expense of a certain monotony, for there is no great variety or contrast in the musical materials employed. The first part consists of song alternating with lamentation; the second part, of song alternating with a comic element. As Victor Belaiev explains in his excellent study of *The Wedding*, 'the lamentation shows itself to be the static element—during it the modulational movement of

the music is suspended, and there remains only the steadfast harmonic background on which the voice embroiders its melodic pattern'—whereas the comic element 'is distinguished by strongly marked musical characteristics, based on the clever use of syncopated rhythms and the sudden addition of choral voices to the solo voice'.

Belaiev goes on to show how the greater part of the melodic material is developed from a single germ, the interval of the fourth divided into a minor third and major second. He traces in considerable detail the development of this fundamental motif throughout the work, but misses a number of its implications by concentrating on only one of its aspects—(i) an ascending sequence of a minor third followed by a major second, or its reversal. It is just as legitimate to identify it with (ii) an ascending sequence of a major second followed by a minor third, or (iii) a leap of a fourth followed by a drop of a major second, or (iv) the same leap followed by a drop of a minor third (together with their respective reversals); and it is present in all these different forms. In fact, it pervades the score to such an extent as to give the impression that almost all the melodic material is related to it—just as if nature should show (through the medium of the slow motion film) the myriad diversities of growth implicit in the buds of one particular plant. The organic feeling of the music is also strengthened by the way new themes are interwoven into the texture—appearing at first as a counterpoint but, later, in a position of independence.

The fundamental motif of *The Wedding* is of modal and harmonic as well as melodic importance. The sum total of its permutations implies the dorian or mixolydian mode according to whether the scale is divided into two conjunctive or disjunctive fourths. The presence of the major second in this motif also provides a pretext for the bitonal use of superimposed chords with their roots a major second apart.¹ In the same way, the presence of the minor third leads to the frequent re-exposition of material at the distance of that interval.²

All this melodic material is original, with the following exceptions: The bridegroom's request for a blessing³ is taken from a collection of liturgical chants for the Octave services. A popular Russian factory song, which had been noted down by Stravinsky's friend

¹ This can be seen at the climaxes of Tableaux Two and Three (C major and D major), at section 94 of Tableau Four (C sharp minor and D sharp minor), and in the final bell chord (B with C sharp added).

² Cf. sections 83–5.

³ Section 50.

Mitusov, plays an important part in the scene of the wedding feast.¹ And one of the themes in the same scene² is a reminiscence of the drunken singing of two Vaudois revellers who were with Stravinsky in the funicular when he was returning from Château d'Oex to Clarens one day at the end of January 1915. This incoherent theme, syncopated by hiccups, consists of an alternation of 4/4 and 3/4 bars. It is typical of Stravinsky's method that its melody should be changed to fit the fundamental motif, while its characteristic rhythm is retained; and, so transformed, it becomes the main subject of the last part of the final tableau.³ In fact, it is used to bring the work to an end;⁴ and there its slow, deliberate deployment (in 3/4 time) is punctuated by the tolling of the bell chord, which is so spread out that, with the exception of an extra bar's rest of three beats just before section 135, it occurs on every eighth beat. As the voices cease singing, pools of silence come flooding in between the measured strokes of the bell chord, and the music dies away in a miraculously fresh and radiant close.

Although the composition of *The Wedding* was finished by the beginning of 1918, it took Stravinsky another five years to find the right orchestral formula. According to Schaeffner, his original idea had been 'to establish two categories of sound: *wind* (including voices) and *percussion*: the first would be provided by the choir, woodwind and brass, the second by two string orchestras, the one playing pizzicato and the other with the bow. Only a few pages were written of a score needing about 150 players for performance, which made the work practically unplayable.' At this point Stravinsky thought of a simpler solution, consisting of an electrically driven pianola and harmonium, a group of percussion instruments and two cymbaloms of different compass; but although the first two tableaux were instrumented on these lines, the difficulties of synchronisation proved too great, and this project too was abandoned. When, after the war, Diaghilev ultimately decided to produce the cantata as a ballet, Stravinsky was forced to find a definitive solution, and in 1921 he made up his mind merely to accompany the voices with an orchestra of percussion divided into instruments with and without definite pitch: four (non-mechanical) pianos, xylophone, timpani, two crotales and a bell, as opposed to two side drums (with

¹ Sections 110, 120, 124, 125, 130-2.

² Sections 91, 127 and 129.

³ It appears in the vocal parts at sections 114, 121 and 122, and in the orchestra at sections 93, 115, 116 and 126.

⁴ Cf. the bass solo at section 133 and the orchestral coda beginning six bars before section 135.

and without snare), two drums (with and without snare), tambourine, bass drum, cymbals and triangle.

It is interesting to see how Natalia Goncharova, who was chosen by Diaghilev for the scenery and costumes, had to vary her designs to suit Stravinsky's change of instrumentation. Her first sketches show brightly coloured and gaily ornamented costumes; but the ones finally chosen, with their austere white and maroon colour scheme, correspond to the more neutral orchestral palette of the pianos and percussion instruments.

Cocteau has suggested that the spirit of *The Rite of Spring* finds its definite orchestral formula in *The Wedding*: but this is not really true, for the two works pose quite different problems. In *The Rite*, the sophisticated use of a vast orchestral apparatus is essential to convey the effect of violence and nervous tension inherent in its conception, while in *The Wedding* the modest-sized orchestra has a minor role to play. It is there to accompany the choir, whose intricate and ingeniously dove-tailed parts provide the core of the work: the instruments with definite pitch underline and support the voices, sometimes moving in parallel parts and sometimes weaving a contrasting harmonic background or ornamental counterpoint, while the instruments without definite pitch emphasise and accentuate the metrical skeleton. But, whether it was Stravinsky's intention or not, the peculiar timbre of the orchestra in *The Wedding* definitely recalls one of those mechanical pianos with drum-, cymbal- and bell-attachment that are to be found in out-of-the-way inns in Madrid, Russia or the Alps and, when the mechanism has been set in motion by a coin, break with a whirr like a startled pheasant into a clatter of gay noise to cheer the festive guests.

The Wedding was ultimately produced by the Russian Ballet on June 13, 1923, at the Théâtre de la Gaîté, Paris, with choreography by Bronislava Nijinska. When three years later Diaghilev brought it to the His Majesty's Theatre, London, with Georges Auric, Francis Poulenc, Vittorio Rieti and Vladimir Dukelsky as the four pianists, there was an outburst of dismay from the critics that equalled in intensity their reaction to *The Rite of Spring* thirteen years earlier. The virulence of this attack so exasperated H. G. Wells that on June 18, 1926, he wrote an open letter, which was printed and distributed as a hand-out with the ballet programme. In it he said: 'Writing as an old-fashioned popular writer, not at all of the highbrow sect, I feel bound to bear my witness on the other side. I do not know of any other ballet so interesting, so amusing, so fresh or nearly so exciting as *Les Noces*. I want to see it again

and again, and because I want to do so I protest against this conspiracy of wilful stupidity that may succeed in driving it out of the programme. . . . That ballet is a rendering in sound and vision of the peasant soul, in its gravity, in its deliberate and simple-minded intricacy, in its subtly varied rhythms in its deep undercurrents of excitement, that will astonish and delight every intelligent man or woman who goes to see it. The silly pretty-pretty tradition of Watteau and Fragonard is flung aside. Instead of fancy dress peasants we have peasants in plain black and white, and the smirking flirtatiousness of Daphnis and Chloe gives place to a richly humorous solemnity. It was an amazing experience to come out from this delightful display with the warp and woof of music and vision still running and interweaving in one's mind, and find a little group of critics flushed with resentment and ransacking the stores of their minds for cheap trite depreciation of the freshest and strongest thing that they had had a chance to praise for a long time.'

9

'The Soldier's Tale'

The beginning of 1918 was one of the darkest moments in Stravinsky's life. Although, like Diaghilev and many of the Russian intellectuals then living in Western Europe, he had felt exhilarated by the 1917 revolution, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk sickened and humiliated him. He found himself completely cut off from his private resources in Russia; and for the first time the possibility must have occurred to him that he might never return to his native country. No new major work of his had been performed since 1914; and although both *Reynard* and *The Wedding* were completed, it was clearly going to be impossible to produce them until after the war. He saw no immediate likelihood of help from Diaghilev, who was indeed at that moment in a position of great difficulty himself: so he decided—temporarily, at least—to break away from the Russian Ballet and do what he could to work out his own salvation.

One day, in the course of a discussion with Ramuz, the idea came to him: 'Why not do something quite *simple*? Why not write together a piece that would need no vast theatre or large public; something with two or three characters and a handful of instrumentalists.' As no theatres were available, a special theatre would be improvised for the purpose, with scenery that could easily be set

up in any hall or building, or even in the open air—in fact, a travelling theatre that would tour Switzerland and give performances in towns or even villages. But even so modest a plan needed financial backing; and it wasn't until Stravinsky had secured the patronage of Werner Reinhart of Winterthur that the collaborators were able to set to work.

As Ramuz was not a man of the theatre, he proposed to write a story which could be read, played and danced—in fact, a kind of mimed narration—while Stravinsky decided to compose a score that would be independent of the text and could be performed separately as a concert suite.

Next came the choice of subject. Stravinsky showed Ramuz Afanassiov's collection of Russian tales; and they were both struck by the cycle of legends dealing with the adventures of the soldier who deserts and the devil who carries off his soul. Although these refer particularly to the period of forced recruitment under Nicholas I, the collaborators decided to broaden and internationalise their treatment of the story—that is to say, in Ramuz's text the scene is laid in Switzerland (and it is open for English, German and other translators to vary the locality to suit their needs), and Stravinsky made his music as non-Russian as possible, even going so far as to use North and South American, Spanish and German material.

Ramuz confined the *dramatis personae* of *The Soldier's Tale* to four: the Soldier and the Devil (both speaking parts), the Princess (silent) and a Reader. In addition, the Princess and the Devil are required to dance. The Reader's role is particularly important and varied. Sometimes he is required to act as narrator; at others, to express the thoughts of the Soldier or address him direct; and also to comment generally on the action.

For the purpose of the plot, the Soldier's desertion is somewhat slurred over; but the fiddle he carries in his knapsack and which the Devil tries to win from him assumes a symbolic importance. In fact, as can be seen from the following brief synopsis, the story becomes a kind of miniature version of the Faust legend: *Part One, Scene One (Beside a brook)*. The Soldier, returning to his home village with a fortnight's leave, is accosted by the Devil disguised as a little old man with a butterfly net. The Devil obtains the Soldier's fiddle in exchange for a magic book and invites him to spend three days of his leave with him. The Soldier accepts. *Scene Two (A crossroads in the country, showing a frontier post, with the village belfry in the distance)*. On reaching his native village, he finds he has been away, not for three days, but for three years. The Devil

appears disguised as a cattle merchant and explains that with the help of the magic book he can make his fortune. *Scene Three (A room)*. By now the Soldier is thoroughly disillusioned by his wealth—

*Je suis énormément riche, je suis riche énormément,
Je suis mort parmi les vivants.*

The Devil calls on him disguised as an old woman pedlar and displays his wares, including a fiddle which the Soldier recognises as his own. He wishes to buy it back, but finding he can get no sound out of it, hurls it into the wings and tears up the book in despair. *Part Two, Scene Four (A room in a palace)*. The Soldier, who has now lost his wealth, comes to a town where the King's daughter is ill and the King has promised her hand in marriage to whomever cures her. The Soldier meets the Devil disguised as a virtuoso violinist and plays cards with him. He loses and plies him with wine, until the Devil falls unconscious and he is able to recover his old fiddle. *Scene Five (The Princess's room)*. The Princess is lying on a couch. The Soldier enters and plays his fiddle. The Princess rises, dances and has just fallen into the Soldier's arms, when the Devil bursts in on them (this time not in disguise); but the Soldier fiddles him into contorsions and with the help of the Princess drags his body into the wings. *Scene Six (The same as Scene Two)*. Some time after their marriage, the Soldier and Princess decide to visit his native village; but as soon as the Soldier crosses the frontier, he falls into the clutches of the Devil (now dressed in gorgeous red apparel), who succeeds in carrying him off. The moral of the story is expressed in the following doggerel couplets:

*Il ne faut pas vouloir ajouter à ce qu'on a ce qu'on avait,
On ne peut pas être à la fois qui on est et qui on était.
Il faut savoir choisir; on n'a pas le droit de tout avoir: c'est défendu.
Un bonheur est tout le bonheur; deux, c'est comme s'ils n'existaient.*

(It should be noted that none of the published librettos are completely reliable; and in some respects the German adaptation by Hans Reinhart is preferable to the French original. No satisfactory English translation has yet been made.)

It was Stravinsky's part of the bargain that he should choose an extremely simple combination of instruments. In his *Chronicle*, he explains: 'The easiest solution would have been to use a polyphonic instrument like the piano or harmonium. The latter was out of the question, chiefly because of its dynamic poverty due to the complete

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absence of accents. Although the piano has much more varied polyphonic qualities and offers many particularly dynamic possibilities, I had to avoid it for two reasons: either my score would have seemed like a piano arrangement—and that would have given evidence of a certain lack of financial means, not at all in keeping with our intentions—or I should have had to use it as a solo instrument, exploiting every possibility of its technique. In other words, I should have had to be specially careful about the “pianism” of my score and make it into a vehicle of virtuosity in order to justify my choice. So there was nothing for it but to decide on a group of instruments, which could include the most representative types, in treble and bass, of the different instrumental families: for the strings, violin and double-bass; for the wood-wind, clarinet (because it has the biggest compass) and bassoon; for the brass, cornet and trombone; finally, the percussion to be played by a single musician; the whole, of course, under a conductor.’

The score consists of the following numbers: *Part One*. 1. The Soldier’s March; 2. Little Tunes beside a Brook; 3. Pastoral. *Part Two*. 4. The Royal March; 5. The Little Concert; 6. Three Dances: (a) Tango: (b) Waltz: (c) Ragtime; 7. The Devil’s Dance; 8. Little Chorale; 9. The Devil’s Song; 10. Great Chorale; 11. Triumphal March of the Devil. Although the Soldier’s March is repeated (with slight variants) between Scenes 1 and 2 and later as introduction to Part Two, and Little Tunes beside a Brook is also repeated once and the Pastoral twice in Part One, the balance of the work is rather upset by the fact that the bulk of the music comes towards the end of the Second Part, numbers 5 to 10 being intended to follow each other in almost unbroken sequence. In numbers 1, 9 and 10 the reading overlaps the music. Numbers 6 and 7 are danced.

All the instruments in the miniature orchestra, with the exception of the double-bass, are treated on solo lines; and in numbers 2, 5, 6, 7 and 11 the violin plays a highly developed *concertante* part, as is appropriate to its role in the plot. The cornet and trombone have the main parts in the Soldier’s March and also the Royal March; honours are almost equally shared by the clarinet and cornet with the violin in the Little Concert; and in the two chorales, the four-part harmony is divided between the clarinet, bassoon, cornet and trombone. This gives the various numbers great variety of character and colouring despite the limited number of instruments at the composer’s command.

The percussion deserves special mention. On his return from America the previous year, Ansermet had brought Stravinsky a

selection of jazz material; and there is no doubt that this influenced him profoundly—(note, for instance, how closely the instrumentation of *The Soldier's Tale* resembles that of the 1916 New Orleans Dixieland jazzband with its clarinet, trumpet, trombone, piano and drums)—so that he not only included a ragtime in his set of dances, but also built up his percussion on jazzband lines. He stipulates that there shall be one player only for two side drums of different sizes (both without snare), a drum without and another with snare, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine and triangle. The score contains many detailed directions for the percussionist, such as this one (from the Ragtime): 'The bass drum is on the player's left and the two side drums directly in front, very close to each other. These instruments are to be struck with a stick with fibre head held in the player's left hand. In his right hand, there is a thin stick with sponge head, which he must take care to hold with the head downwards and to wield with the fingers only (the arm remaining perfectly rigid) in order to give the rhythm a mechanical and precise character.' The percussion is almost completely silent in numbers 2, 3, 5, 8 and 10: elsewhere its use ranges from simple emphasis to independent counterpoint. For the greater part of the Tango, it provides the whole accompaniment for the solo violin; and in the final number, the Triumphal March of the Devil, it starts by underlining the violin theme, but gradually develops a more or less independent existence so that, when the other instruments *tacent*, it is left to bring the work to a strange and sombre conclusion. It is as if, once the Devil has finally carried off the Soldier, the spirit of the music should abandon its body and only its skeleton remain behind.

It is curious to find that, as in the case of *The Rite of Spring*, one of the most memorable themes of *The Soldier's Tale* came to Stravinsky in a dream, during which, according to Schaeffner, he saw a gipsy woman seated on the steps at the back of a caravan, playing a violin with the full length of the bow at the same time as she suckled her child. This haunting minor motif is first heard from the cornet followed by the bassoon in the Little Concert¹ and, later, from the violin in the Tango.² Although no very extended use is made of it, its character is so strong that in retrospect it seems to flavour the whole work.

In *The Soldier's Tale* Stravinsky has adopted no unifying formula in the case of *The Fire Bird* and *The Wedding*. Instead, he encourages each solo instrument to develop an independent linear existence and then fits them together like pieces of a mosaic. Full

¹ Sections 13–15, 17 and 18.

² Sections 4 and 8.

use of the devices of prolongation and foreshortening is made to break up the symmetry of the phrasing so that the texture of the work is particularly rich in metrical counterpoint. A good example of foreshortening occurs at section 4 of the Tango where an accompanying figure of a quaver followed by two semiquavers (2/8) suddenly dashes off into a hurried sequence of three semiquavers (3/16) for a few bars before resuming its normal gait. How complex the metrical texture can become may be seen from section 21 of the Little Concert where, over an *ostinato* accompaniment made up of superimposed figures in 3/4, 4/8 and 3/8 time, the main theme is spread out over a sequence of 5/4, 3/8, 4/4 and 3/8 bars. The clash of tonalities between the various parts is sometimes very marked—especially, for instance, when the cornet explodes into fanfares in distant keys as in the Soldier's March and the Little Concert—but these aberrations are usually anchored by a strong bass *ostinato* that keeps the fundamental key continually in mind, just as it also ultimately restores order to the otherwise ambiguous cross-accents. Although the musical material, as is the case with most of Stravinsky's compositions since 1914, continues to be mainly diatonic, there are moments when it gets squeezed into chromatic shape;¹ and the use of the violin with double stopping also lends itself to chromatic exploitation, particularly in the Ragtime and the Triumphal March of the Devil. An interesting and unusual feature is the way themes are apt to stray from one number to another. The Little Concert, for instance, which stands almost at the centre of the work, is like a magpie's nest: practically all its themes are borrowed from elsewhere, and yet it manages to preserve a distinct form, timbre and character of its own.

To summarise: The music is unique in the way it combines linear precision with sonorous perspective. The most heterogeneous materials are assembled together in the score; and, by brilliant manipulation, the composer obtains an effect of complete coherence, and integration.

After many delays and a prolonged period of rehearsal, the first performance took place at Lausanne on September 28, 1918. The scenery and costumes were by the Vaudois artist, René Auberjonois. Three students from Lausanne University played the roles of the Soldier, the Devil and the Reader; and Georges Pitoëv and his wife, Ludmilla, came over from Geneva to dance the parts of the Devil and the Princess. Ansermet conducted; and the production was in the hands of Ramuz and Stravinsky.

¹ As, for instance, the main theme of the Soldier's March at sections 10–12.

The audience that assembled at the late hour of 9 p.m.—the performance lasted little more than an hour and, as Ramuz rather naïvely says, it was necessary somehow ‘to fill up the evening’—found before them a little movable stage mounted on trestles with a podium on either side. The Reader was seated on one podium before a table with a carafe of white wine on it and a glass, while the orchestra was placed on the other podium with the conductor. During the interval the Reader refreshed himself with a glass of wine and drank to the conductor’s health. At times the audience may have been slightly puzzled by the curtain’s habit of rising twice on the same scene, the first time (presumably) to present it as a picture, and the second time as a background for the action. But the performance, according to Stravinsky, was first-rate. ‘The true note was struck then,’ he writes, ‘but unfortunately I have never since seen a performance that has satisfied me to the same degree.’ The truth of the matter is that *The Soldier’s Tale* is not really effective in the theatre. The handling of the subject is essentially non-dramatic. Also, it is extremely difficult to assemble seven first-class soloists for the orchestra and two players (for the parts of the Soldier and the Devil) who can mime as well as act, in addition to the Reader and the two dancers. As Ramuz says: ‘We perceived rather late that the most practical thing would have been to work within a traditional framework and that to innovate a new type of entertainment, even by the process of simplification, meant complicating everything.’

As for the projected tour of Switzerland, halls had been hired, posters printed, a company engaged: but an influenza epidemic started to sweep over war-exhausted Europe; and, one after another, musicians, actors, stage-hands succumbed to it, and the tour had to be abandoned.

The subsequent history of *The Soldier’s Tale* is interesting. In the first place, Diaghilev would have nothing to do with it, whereas a kindred work like *Reynard* was soon taken into the Russian Ballet repertory. The fact that it had been planned and carried out without reference to him he regarded almost as a breach of faith. Since 1918 there have been spasmodic revivals—particularly the one under Klemperer at the Krolloper, Berlin, in 1928—but it has never held the stage for long. On the other hand, the concert suite¹ was first performed at a festival of modern music at Frankfurt-am-Main on June 20, 1923, with Scherchen as conductor, and has now become accepted as a landmark in the evolution of modern chamber music. In view of the way in which the work depends for its unique effect

¹ Consisting of all the numbers, with the exception of 3, 8 and 9.

on the interplay of the different solo instruments, it seems little short of sacrilege to find that Stravinsky himself has made an arrangement for clarinet, violin and piano¹ and has even taken part in its public performance. This is an error of taste that it is hard to excuse.

The composition of *The Soldier's Tale* by no means exhausted Stravinsky's interest in jazz. On the contrary, being fascinated 'by its truly popular appeal, its freshness and the novel rhythm which so clearly revealed its negro origin', he decided to idealise this new dance music in the form of a concert piece and accordingly wrote a *Ragtime* for flute, clarinet, horn, cornet, trombone, cymbalom, 1st and 2nd violins, viola, (no 'cello), double-bass and percussion. Not unnaturally, the work is fairly close to *The Soldier's Tale* in style; but jazz influences twist its melodic line into even more sinuous chromaticisms and—a remarkable thing in his works of this period—the common time signature is unchanged throughout its 178 bars.

The score was finished on the morning of November 11, 1918. Some years later it was produced by Massine at Covent Garden as a dance *divertissement* for himself and Lydia Lopokova.

10

'Pulcinella'

Now that the war was over, the barriers between the countries of Western and Central Europe could be raised, and music and the arts come back into general circulation. But this return to more normal conditions could only take place slowly and gradually; and in any case, Russia remained outside the pale—or, rather, within her own isolated compartment—while her communist experiment was being developed. So, for the moment, Stravinsky stayed on in Switzerland and, feeling weakened by his recent bout of influenza, decided, instead of embarking on a major composition, to arrange a new concert suite from *The Fire Bird* for medium orchestra. The work had originally been written for an orchestra of nearly a hundred players; and the first concert suite (1911) consisted of five literal extracts from the ballet score: 1. Introduction—Kashchei's Enchanted Garden and the Fire Bird's Dance; 2. Supplication of the Fire Bird; 3. The Princesses' Game with the Golden Apples; 4. The Princesses' Horovod; 5. Infernal Dance of all Kashchei's Subjects. For the new suite, Stravinsky reduced the orchestra to about sixty players, cut out the second and third numbers

¹ This shorter suite consists of numbers 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7.

of the original suite and added the Lullaby and Finale after the Infernal Dance. The re-orchestration led to many adjustments in the score—none so radical as those that had been made when *The Nightingale* was turned into a symphonic poem, but nevertheless sufficient to keep him busy until the following May. The revised suite was dedicated to Ansermet and his newly founded Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.

Three minor compositions belong to the first half of 1919:

The Four Russian Songs, dedicated to the Croat singer Madame Maja de Strozzi-Pecic and her husband, follow closely the so-called 'Russian' style of the last five years. The first ('Duck') belongs in theme and feeling to the 1917 group of Children's Tales. The second ('Counting Song') might be a fragment of material left over from *The Wedding*. The third ('The Sparrow') has the same lay-out as the first, third and fourth of the divination songs in *Saucers* and would probably have been more effective if written for solo voice and chorus. In the fourth ('Dissenting Song'), the piano accompaniment looks as if it had been arranged from a score for cymbalom and one or two wind instruments—possibly clarinets. Here the vocal line is particularly interesting. In the first part of the song, its phrases are grouped alternately round the rival poles of attraction of major and minor thirds, while in the Gloria that forms the coda it takes on all the devotional intensity of the lamentations in *The Wedding*.

The Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet were written for and dedicated to Werner Reinhart, through whose generosity it had been possible to stage *The Soldier's Tale*; so it was by no means inappropriate that the last piece should bear a close resemblance to the Ragtime of that score. In the *Cat's Cradle Songs*, Stravinsky had already shown his predilection for the clarinet; and in this miniature suite he explored some of the virtuoso qualities of the instrument. In doing so, he was forced to develop a melodic line that would be strong enough to stand without a metrical and harmonic accompaniment; and the work, though not very important in itself, undoubtedly heralds a period of greater melodic freedom.

The *Piano-Rag-Music* of June 1919 is the least successful of all his essays in contemporary jazz idiom. He has explained that in writing it he was 'inspired by the same ideas and aims as in the *Ragtime* for eleven instruments'. He wished to stress the percussive possibilities of the piano and found that, for the most part, the different episodes were dictated almost automatically by his fingers on the keyboard. In contrast to the fluent and even-tempered *Ragtime*, this piece is

composed of a number of violently contrasted fragments and makes a somewhat incoherent whole. Stravinsky had not really attempted any important pianistic writing since *Petrushka*—the four-piano accompaniment to *The Wedding* was only decided on two years later—and certain episodes, such as those in which the piano is treated as a cymbalom (bars 5—7), do not really come off. Also, there are moments when his preoccupation with the delights of syncopation leads him to forget the necessity of having something of musical importance to syncopate.

In the early spring Stravinsky left Morges to visit Paris and meet Diaghilev, who had at last managed to extricate his company from Spain in order to fulfil an engagement at the London Coliseum. To begin with, the meeting seems to have been a rather sticky one on both sides. Stravinsky tried to interest Diaghilev in the recent success of *The Soldier's Tale*—but in vain. In the eyes of the impresario, he had committed an almost unforgivable sin by conceiving, composing and producing an important theatrical work on his own—without reference to Diaghilev or his company. On the other hand, Diaghilev was only too anxious to attract the lost sheep back into the fold and, according to Stravinsky, 'talked with exaggerated enthusiasm' about his plan to produce *The Song of the Nightingale* with scenery and costumes by Henri Matisse and choreography by Massine. It was the composer's turn to evince little or no interest—he had written *The Song of the Nightingale* as a symphonic poem and now intended it for the concert platform, not the stage. So Diaghilev found himself compelled to try a new tack. The recent success of *The Good-Humoured Ladies*, danced to Scarlatti's music arranged and orchestrated by Tommasini, had led him to plan another ballet with an adapted score; and Respighi was busy orchestrating a selection of Rossini's *Péchés de ma Vieillesse* for *La Boutique Fantasque*. Would Stravinsky like to play the same sort of game with Pergolesi? Diaghilev had collected a number of unfinished Pergolesi manuscripts during his recent visits to Italy. He would place these at Stravinsky's disposal and, if he cared to work them up into a score, the argument of the ballet could be adapted from a manuscript dating from 1700, which he had found at Naples and which contained a number of *commedia dell'arte* sketches featuring *Pulcinella*, the traditional hero of the Neapolitan popular stage. At this point Stravinsky relented. The offer was too tempting to be rejected; and the bargain was clinched by Diaghilev's promise that Picasso, who was then working on *The Three-Cornered Hat*, should be commissioned to design the scenery and costumes. Stravinsky returned to

Morges and began to work on the score as soon as he had finished the *Piano-Rag-Music*.

The task before him was not a simple one—it was not an academic matter of realising a figured bass or instrumenting a suite of existing compositions. The Pergolesi material (even when stiffened by the inclusion of some of his published trio sonatas) was too fragmentary and incomplete for that. Nor was it likely that Stravinsky would be satisfied with the rather superficial role of editor. He has himself described the problem as he saw it. 'Should my line of action be dominated by my love or by my respect for Pergolesi's music? Is it love or respect that urges us to possess a woman? Is it not by love alone that we succeed in penetrating to the very essence of a being? But, then, does love diminish respect? Respect alone remains barren and can never serve as a productive or creative factor. In order to create, there must be a dynamic force, and what force is more potent than love? To me it seems that to ask the question is to answer it.'

There is no doubt that this cheerfully planned rape was carried out with great success and even mutual benefit. From the various manuscript fragments collected by Diaghilev, five of the published Trio Sonatas¹ and half a dozen songs (including the well-known *Se tu m'ami*) which were distributed between soprano, tenor and bass, Stravinsky constructed a score of nineteen clearly contrasted numbers for small orchestra. His leaning towards pungent, if not discordant harmonies and asymmetry in phrasing, the rather startling relief into which his *concertante* style of instrumentation throws his musical line, and the percussive emphasis with which much of the music is enunciated without the actual use of percussion, in no way impair the warm Mediterranean geniality of the original composer; and the result is a high-spirited masquerade rather than a pastiche. The effect of this work of adaptation on his own musical thought was not immediately apparent; but he certainly began to realise that there were hitherto unexplored possibilities in the use of certain classical devices and forms.

The episode in the Neapolitan manuscript chosen as a basis for the ballet was called *The Four Pulcinellos*; and the action runs as follows: All the young girls are in love with Pulcinella; but the young men to whom they are betrothed are inflamed with jealousy and plot to kill him. They borrow costumes resembling that of Pulcinella

¹ Nos. I, II, VII, VIII and XII of the Ricordi edition are used respectively in the introductory Sinfonia, Scherzino, Allegro alla Breve, Andantino and Finale of Stravinsky's score.

and present themselves to their sweethearts in disguise; but Pulcinella changes place with Fourbo, his double, who pretends to succumb to the blows of his enemies. The real Pulcinella, after disguising himself as a magician, resuscitates his double and reveals himself at the very moment when the young men, thinking they have got rid of their rival, come to claim their sweethearts. He arranges marriages for them all, and himself weds Pimpinella, receiving the blessing of Fourbo, who in his turn assumes the magician's guise.

As each number of the score was completed, it was sent to Massine in a piano arrangement so that he could go ahead with his choreography; and this was the cause of a number of awkward misunderstandings. It must be remembered that, until now, the Russian Ballet had known Stravinsky only as a composer who exacted a very large number of players for the performance of his scores. At least a hundred instrumentalists are needed if *The Fire Bird*, *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* are to be properly performed; and though *The Song of the Nightingale* uses a smaller complement of players than the opera, a full symphony orchestra of nearly seventy players is still necessary. The fact that during the war his ideas on instrumentation had radically changed and he was now interested only in much smaller chamber ensembles was not appreciated by Diaghilev or Massine, who were not yet familiar with *Reynard* or *The Soldier's Tale* or the less ambitious chamber works of the last five years. They undoubtedly expected the score of *Pulcinella* to conform to traditional symphony orchestra lay-out; and, to begin with, Massine devised his choreography accordingly. When the Company returned to Paris in the autumn of 1919 after their triumphant season at the London Alhambra, Stravinsky came over frequently from Morges to attend rehearsals; but often, when he was shown certain steps and movements, he realised to his dismay that in character and scale they in no way corresponded to the modest size of his chamber orchestra of thirty-three players (two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, trombone and twenty-three strings, including a solo *concertante* string quintet). He writes: 'They had wanted, and looked for, something quite different from my score, something which it could not give. The choreography had, therefore, to be altered and adapted to the volume of my music, and that caused them no little annoyance, though they realised that there was no other solution.'

Similar difficulties were encountered over Picasso's scenery. According to Cocteau, it had originally been intended that the setting

should depict an eighteenth century theatre with its lustre, boxes and red plush as a frame for the smaller Neapolitan scene: but ultimately it was decided to scrap the framework and magnify the smaller Neapolitan setting to fit the whole stage.

During the Russian Ballet's winter season at the Paris Opera House, Stravinsky had an opportunity of seeing *The Three-Cornered Hat*, which had been first produced in London the previous summer; and this may account for the echoes of de Falla's style to be found in certain passages in the finale of *Pulcinella*. He also attended the first ballet performance of *The Song of the Nightingale* on February 2, 1920, but has left it on record that it compared unfavourably with the first concert performance (given by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande at Geneva on December 6, 1919), despite the fact that both were conducted by Ansermet. 'I reached the conclusion very regretfully,' he writes, 'since I was the author of many works for the theatre, that a perfect rendering can be achieved only in the concert hall, because the stage presents a combination of several elements upon which the music has often to depend, so that it cannot rely upon the exclusive consideration that it receives at a concert.' This was a momentous decision; and, indeed, from now onwards, the number of works he wrote for the stage declined. Diaghilev would always try to keep *The Fire Bird* and *Petrushka* in his current repertory; from time to time he would revive *The Rite of Spring*, *The Song of the Nightingale* and *Pulcinella*; he would also fulfil his promise to produce the two wartime compositions, *Reynard* and *The Wedding*: but during the remaining nine years of his life no more than three new works would be written by Stravinsky for the Russian Ballet, and only in the case of *Apollo Musagetes* would the composer feel in any way satisfied that his musical intentions had been properly carried out. The truth was that Stravinsky was becoming increasingly impatient of the constraints of collaboration and unwilling to make the musical compromises and adjustments that were necessary for theatrical productions. There were probably other than purely esthetic reasons for this change in attitude. His wartime experiences had brought home to him the risk of relying too exclusively for his income on performances of his music by any single theatrical company. Religious scruples too may have played some part. According to Serge Lifar, a few years later he was to be found repudiating the ballet as an artistic form, referring to it in a letter to Diaghilev (1923) as 'the anathema of Christ'; but it is difficult to assess this remark at its proper value without fuller knowledge of the context.

EXILE

In any case, when *Pulcinella* was performed for the first time at the Paris Opera House on May 15, 1920, the production was entirely satisfactory despite (or, perhaps, because of) the repeated adjustments between the three collaborators during the period of rehearsal. '*Pulcinella*,' writes Stravinsky, 'is one of those productions where everything harmonises, where all the elements—subject, music, dancing and artistic setting—form a coherent and homogeneous whole.' Ansermet conducted. Massine himself danced the title role; Karsavina was Pimpinella; and Cecchetti, the company's veteran ballet-master, appeared in the minor part of the Doctor. Massine had used classical steps as the basis of a comic style—for instance, *Pulcinella*'s pirouettes were graced by burlesque arm movements, which were exaggerated by the wide sleeves of his white costume—and the choreography was considered an unqualified success. Critics were divided, however, in their opinion of the music. The preservationists naturally cried 'Sacrilege!' but the younger generation of composers was enchanted, and in the next few years there was an outbreak of so-called 'neo-classical' works, too many of which, alas! were merely undistinguished pastiches of eighteenth century music, liberally besprinkled with 'wrong' notes and decked out with blatant orchestral colours.

For concert purposes, Stravinsky made a suite out of the ballet score, using eleven of the nineteen numbers. This was first performed under Ansermet in Paris in December, 1922. Some of the material was later adapted for violin and piano in the *Suite* of 1925 and the *Suite Italienne* of 1933; and the violin part of at least one of these *Suites* has also been transcribed for 'cello.

Feeling that Paris had now become the hub of Europe's musical life, Stravinsky decided the time had come to settle down in France. He accordingly left Switzerland in June 1920 and took his family to Brittany for a holiday at Carantec.

INTERLUDE II

Sacrifice to Apollo

THERE IS no doubt that shortly after the composition of *Pulcinella* Stravinsky reached a turning point in his musical development. His change of attitude to the theatre is only one instance of his desire to exercise stricter control over his musical material than heretofore. But even in the more propitious setting of the concert hall, performance intervened as an intermediate stage between the composer and his creation, and offered numerous opportunities for distortion—particularly by conductors. His fear of misinterpretation seems to have amounted almost to an obsession: his *Chronicle* is full of references to the importance of a conductor transmitting music rather than interpreting it; and in the final lecture of his *Musical Poetics* he goes so far as to maintain that ‘the conflict between the two principles of execution and interpretation is at the root of all the errors, all the faults and all the misunderstandings which come between a work and the listener, and which deform the faithful transmission of the composer’s message.’ This phobia was probably also responsible in part for his various experiments with mechanical pianos, the care he devoted in later years to the recording of his works for gramophone, and his decision early in the twenties to embark on a subsidiary career as conductor of his own works and executant of the solo parts of his Piano Concerto, *Capriccio* and Concerto for Two Solo Pianos.

Despite its possibly apocryphal origin and faulty logic, the following anecdote is typical of the composer, both in its line of argument and the dogmatic nature of its utterance. It is said that one morning in London he was with a friend in a taxi when, just as they came to Ludgate Hill, the bells of St. Paul’s began to ring. He leaned forward to listen and tapped on the window for the driver to stop. Then he turned to his friend and said: ‘That is really the ideal way to make music. A man pulls a rope; but what happens at the other end is of no importance to him. He cannot make the bells ring more softly or more loudly; he cannot alter their rhythm, nor increase nor diminish their tone. He has nothing to do, except pull the rope—the bells do all the rest. The music is not in him; it lives in the bells. The man at the rope is the prototype of the ideal conductor.’

Signs of the new order are to be found in his compositions from 1922 onwards—*Mavra*, the Octet, the Piano Concerto, Sonata, etc.—and at first sight it appeared as if this change were the logical outcome of his interest in the music of earlier periods, and Pergolesi the catalyzer who helped to precipitate it. The public and critics soon noticed that Stravinsky was beginning to explore the possibilities of contrapuntal development and that some of his technical devices seemed to be closely related to the common idiom of eighteenth century music; and they concluded that he had reverted to classicism, and his music was labelled neo-classical accordingly. In an article contributed to *The Dominant* in December, 1927, Stravinsky himself sounded a pertinent warning against the danger of basing this judgment on such superficial evidence. He pointed out that 'classicism itself was characterised, not in the least by its technical processes which, then as now, were themselves subject to modification from period to period, but rather by its constructive values. . . . Classical music—true classical music—claimed musical form as its basic substance.' A further warning against the delusion that modern composers should be expected to work in an antiquated idiom appeared in an interview he gave the London General Press in 1928, when he said: 'To speak the language of a former generation is not the same thing as to create. The old composers had something to say; but that is not true of today's champions of the good old times. What these people want is not art but routine.'

Perhaps one of the most satisfactory definitions of the vexed terms 'romantic' and 'classical' as applied to music was given by J. C. Fillmore in his *History of Pianoforte Music* (1885). There he wrote: 'In classical music, form is first and emotional content subordinate; in romantic music, content is first and form subordinate. The classical ideal is predominantly an intellectual one. Its products are characterised by clearness of thought, by completeness and symmetry, by harmonious proportion, by simplicity and repose. Classical works, whether musical or literary, are positive, clear, finished.'

That this closely approximates to the ideal Stravinsky set before himself is apparent, both from the nature of some of his subsequent works and also from his published utterances. Writing in his *Chronicle* about Diaghilev's revival of Chaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* at the London Alhambra in 1921—the date is significant—he declared himself a convinced believer in the principles of classicism as applied to ballet, 'which, in its very essence, by the beauty of its discipline and the aristocratic austerity of its forms, so closely

corresponds with my conception of art. For here in classical dancing I see the triumph of studied conception over vagueness, of the rule over the arbitrary, of order over chance. I am thus brought face to face with the eternal conflict in art between the Apollonian and the Dionysian principles. The latter assumes ecstasy to be the final goal—that is to say, the losing of oneself—whereas art demands above all the full consciousness of the artist. There can, therefore, be no doubt as to my choice between the two. And if I appreciate so highly the value of classical ballet, it is not simply a matter of taste on my part, but because I see in it the perfect expression of the Apollonian principle.'

The same argument is developed further in the fourth lecture of his *Musical Poetics*, where he writes: 'Romanticism and classicism are terms which have been endowed with such different meanings that I shall hardly be expected to take sides in this quarrel which ultimately resolved itself into a quarrel of words. Nevertheless, it would be true to say that, by and large, the principles of subordination and insubordination characterise the attitude of the classicist and romanticist to their work. That this is a theoretical distinction, however, can be seen from the fact that at the origin of any work of creation there is always an irrational element over which the spirit of discipline has no power or control. This is what André Gide has so clearly described when he explains that a classical work is beautiful by virtue of its subjugated romanticism. The implication of this aphorism is the need for subjugation. . . . To sum up, the clear integration of a work of art and its crystallisation demand that all the Dionysian elements, which stimulate a composer and set in motion the rising sap of his imagination, be adequately controlled before we succumb to their fever, and ultimately subordinated to discipline: such is Apollo's command.'

In his new role of Apollonian, Stravinsky had to abandon a certain measure of his freedom of action; but he faced this with equanimity. In the third lecture of his *Musical Poetics* he writes: 'For me, liberty consists in freedom of action within the narrow limits I have imposed on myself for each of my works. I will go further: The more I limit my field of action and hem myself in with obstacles, the greater and wider is my freedom. If I remove something that is hindering me, I am the weaker by its absence. The more restrictions I impose on myself, the more my mind is liberated from its shackles.' Here he shows himself of the same opinion as Goethe when he wrote, '*In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister.*'

This necessity for an almost ascetic restraint meant that a number

of the qualities that were characteristic of his earlier compositions and were beginning to endear him to his public had to be sacrificed. In particular, the expression of his music seemed to change and, with it, its emotional quality. The composer who a few years previously had written music that seemed, for instance, literally to embody the aspirations and frustrations of the puppet *Petrushka*, or to transmit the panic of spring, now claimed that music was, 'by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a natural phenomenon, etc. . . . If music seems to express something, this is merely an illusion and not a reality. It is simply an additional attribute which, by tacit and inveterate agreement, we have lent it, thrust upon it, as a label, a convention.' Owing to the accident that the greater part of his earlier music was accompanied by particularly vivid stage action, it had not unnaturally acquired in the public mind an adventitious glamour; and this may have been fortified on occasion by the part played by his dream imagination by providing the initial impetus for such works as *The Rite of Spring* and *The Soldier's Tale*. Henceforward, he would do his best to forswear the temptations of extramusical expression in his compositions and to guard against unauthorised expression in their interpretation. This did not mean that they would lack emotion. Far from it. But he wanted the emotion engendered by his music to be purged of impurities—to be an emotion of sounds and not an emotion of ideas.

These were high ideals, and difficult of attainment; and it must not be thought that he was uniformly successful in all he set out to do. That the Apollonian method did not prove altogether suitable when applied to a fairy tale ballet, for instance, can be seen from a comparison of *The Fairy's Kiss* (1928) with *The Fire Bird*; and there are passages in works like the Piano Sonata and the *Duo Concertante* where the bottom seems to have fallen out of the formal edifice, leaving the musical content to leak away. But perhaps the clearest way to judge relative losses and gains is to contrast two works like *The Rite of Spring* and *Persephone* (1934). In both cases, the pretext for the music is a stage action dealing with spring; but the earlier work, despite the composer's determined effort to impose order on his musical material, is in the last resort romantic and Dionysian in its violent and troubled appeal, whereas *Persephone* is a pure and lucid example of the classical spirit working with full objective awareness and perfect control.

And, finally, a word of warning: From what has been said above, let it not be thought that the term 'romantic' is here being used in

any derogatory sense. It would be against the consensus of critical opinion—in this country, at least—to suggest that there is any absolute standard of esthetic measurement which accepts the classical work of art and rejects the romantic *per se*. The important thing is to state the nature of the change in Stravinsky's attitude to his art and to expound the underlying principles of his so-called classicism. It must be left to posterity to assess the relative values of his different works ; but whatever preferences the public may show, it is difficult to believe that *Persephone* or the Symphony of Psalms will be found by unbiased critics to rank below *The Rite of Spring* or *The Wedding*.

CHAPTER IV
COMPOSER, CONDUCTOR, PERFORMER
(FRANCE, 1920-1928)

11

Symphonies of Wind Instruments

STRAVINSKY DID not find Carantec an altogether congenial spot for his summer holiday. Writing to Ramuz, he complained: 'I can't say that I like Brittany very much (as I liked the country in the canton of Vaud). In the first place, the weather's always bad; and then, for my part, I don't find the place at all French. . . . It's true that the peasants are good fellows; but that's so everywhere. . . . The place is full of conventional middle-class trippers who can't afford to go to Deauville. It's not at all amusing—people who start singing outside our windows when we are in bed, and louder than is necessary in the streets at night; but apparently they think they are justified in letting themselves go when on holiday. I sleep little and compose music.' The music referred to was a Concertino for string quartet and a piece dedicated to the memory of Debussy. In style, both of these are closely affiliated to the works of the last five years and show little or no signs of the new ideas that had started to germinate in his mind since the composition of *Pulcinella*.

The Concertino was written for and dedicated to the Flonzaley String Quartet, a group of Vaudois musicians. In Stravinsky's own words, it is 'a piece in one single movement, treated in the form of a free sonata allegro with a definitely *concertante* part for the first violin'. After the exposition of the main allegro, there is a brief andante, which consists of a cadenza in *tempo rubato* for the first violin solo, accompanied by an obstinate but irregular reiteration of two plucked notes in the bass at the interval of a major tenth (E and G sharp). After this cadenza, the allegro is resumed and developed, rising to an almost percussive climax (*très mordant*) with syncopated accents, slightly reminiscent of the last bars of the finale of *Pulcinella*. A brief episode intervenes, with the first violin presenting a theme that might have come out of *Reynard*;¹ the percussive climax is repeated; and the work ends with a calm andante coda,

¹ Concertino, section 22.

based on the cadenza, but treated polyphonically by all four instruments.

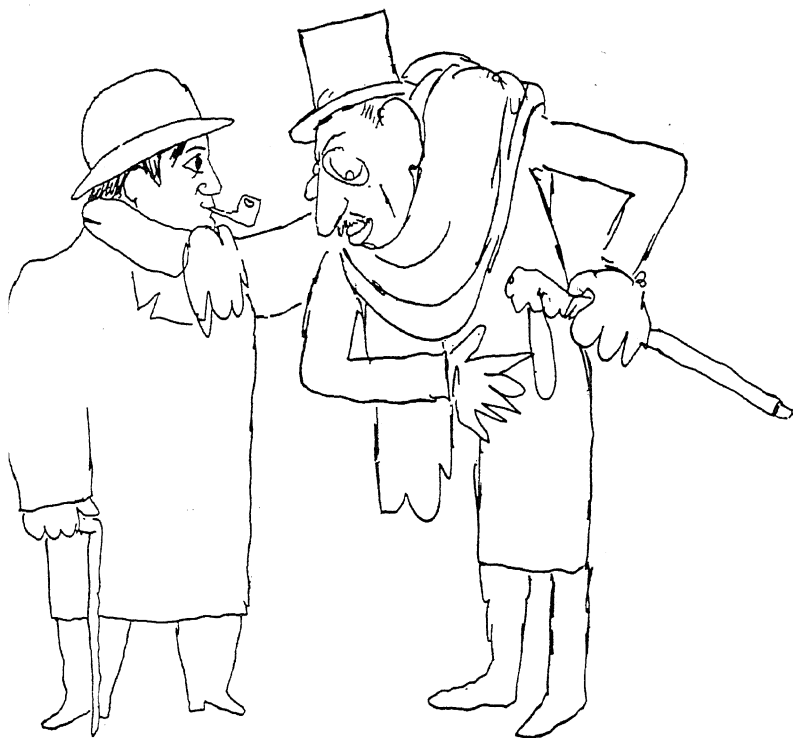
This Concertino is sometimes played as a pendant to the Three Pieces for String Quartet. It represents a more serious attempt to tackle the problem of writing for string quartet, but suffers from the fact that it was composed at a time when Stravinsky was feeling particularly hostile to the strings because of their expressive qualities; and its effect is particularly dry, harsh and crabbed. It is an interesting essay, but not a work that is likely to maintain its position in the string quartet repertory.

After the Concertino, Stravinsky avoided the strings for some years; and his next work was written for twenty-one woodwind and brass instruments. Its genesis is to be traced to a request he received from the *Revue Musicale* that he should contribute a brief work to a special number of that magazine to be devoted to the memory of Debussy, who had died during the war on March 25, 1918. A very real friendship had existed between the two composers since their initial meeting after the first performance of *The Fire Bird*; and as token of their mutual regard, each had dedicated one of his works to the other—Stravinsky his *King of the Stars* in 1911, and Debussy the third of his pieces for two pianos, *En Blanc et Noir*, in 1915. Speaking of Debussy's death in his *Chronicle*, Stravinsky wrote: 'I grieved not only at the loss of one whose great friendship had been marked with unfailing kindness towards myself and my work, but at the passing of a mature artist who, in spite of the fact that his health was hopelessly undermined, had still been able to retain his creative powers to the full, and whose musical genius had been in no way impaired throughout the whole period of his activity.'

For the *Revue Musicale*, he wrote a short wordless chorale, which was published in a version arranged for piano. He was not content, however, to leave the work like that, but during the remainder of his holiday at Carantec and his subsequent move to Garches where he spent the winter, expanded it until it became (in his own words) 'an austere ritual, which is unfolded in terms of short litanies between different groups of homogeneous instruments'.

This is one of his least known works: it is seldom performed and has never been recorded for gramophone; and yet, if only from the structural point of view, it is so remarkable that it deserves special attention.

The first point to make clear is that in writing these Symphonies Stravinsky calculated that he could obtain the dynamic effects he wanted by the juxtaposition of instruments with different timbres



PICASSO AND STRAVINSKY (Rome 1917): drawing by
Jean Cocteau.



STRAVINSKY (1920): drawing by Picasso.

COMPOSER, CONDUCTOR, PERFORMER

playing in their natural *mezzo-forte* throughout and not by directing individual instruments to play more loudly or softly. Secondly, he insisted on metronomic precision and devised a scheme in which the different episodes were carefully geared together on the same principle as in *The Wedding*.

On analysis, the work is found to be based on six different musical subjects:

- A. Bell motif (♩=72).
- B. Chorale (♩=36).
- C. Two Russian popular tunes (*a*) on five notes, and (*b*) on three notes (♩=108).
- D. Pastoral (♩=216)—similar in style to the 'Little Tunes beside a Brook' movement in *The Soldier's Tale*.
- E. Quicker variant of the bell motif (♩=108).
- F. Savage Dance (♩=288).

This material is presented and developed in the following sequence :

1. Introduction: short, broken references to A, B and F.
2. Exposition of the two Russian popular tunes C (*a*) and (*b*).
3. Bridge passage (A and B), leading to exposition of the Pastoral D.
4. Bridge passage (B interrupted by A), leading to a shortened recapitulation of the Pastoral.
5. Bridge passage (B and A), leading to a slowed-up recapitulation (♩=72) of the second Russian popular tune C (*b*), followed by another bridge passage (A and B), leading to—
6. a slightly shortened recapitulation of the first Russian popular tune C (*a*), which preludes the appearance of the variant of the bell motif (E), interrupted by B and F.
7. Exposition of the Savage Dance (F).
8. Bridge passage (B and E), leading to a shortened recapitulation of the Savage Dance, followed by its development and an echo of the bell variant (E).
9. Coda: chorale (B).

The effect of this method of construction is quite extraordinary. Not only are the metres of the various episodes geared together in simple mathematical ratio; but, once a subject is exposed, however briefly, it seems to continue implicitly, though silently, until it is re-exposed at some later moment in the course of the work. These Symphonies are like a carpet woven out of a number of differently

coloured threads. Quite apart from the surface sound in performance, they seem to have a hidden sound life of their own—one of extreme richness and complexity. The final impression is one of sombre brazen mathematical splendour, in which the various episodes are framed by a strange clangour as of bells. The chorale that forms the coda is particularly moving. It consists of a slow solemn succession of diatonic chords moving in two synchronised streams. The even tenor of this procession is interrupted by occasional pauses. The movement comes finally to rest on a chord of the ninth, which contains in it the chord of the dominant as well as the tonic, a compression that takes on a special significance in Stravinsky's later works.

The first performance of the Symphonies took place at the Queen's Hall, London, in 1921, with Kussevitsky as conductor; and Stravinsky has related the unfortunate circumstances that led to a complete fiasco. 'In the first place, the work was given in an ill-chosen sequence. This music, composed for a score of wind instruments, an ensemble to which people were not accustomed at that time and whose timbre was bound to seem rather disappointing, was placed immediately after the pompous marches of *The Golden Cockerel*, with their well known orchestral brilliance. And this is what happened. As soon as the marches were over, three-quarters of the instrumentalists left their desks, and in the vast arena of the Queen's Hall I saw my twenty musicians still in their places at the back of the platform at an enormous distance from the conductor. . . . To conduct or control a group of instruments at such a distance is an exceedingly arduous task. It was particularly so on this occasion, as the character of my music demanded the most delicate care if it was to reach and tame the ear of the public. Both my work and Kussevitsky himself were thus victimised by untoward circumstances in which no conductor in the world could have made good.'

Contemporary with the Symphonies is a group of eight little piano pieces for children called *The Five Fingers*, in which the 'fingers of the right hand, once on the keys, remain in the same position for an episode and sometimes even for the whole length of the piece, while the left hand accompanies the melody with a harmonic or contrapuntal design of the utmost simplicity'. In style these pieces seem to stand at the parting of the ways. The *Lento*, with its Russian theme and soft clashes between major and minor thirds, evokes the memory of certain passages in *The Rite of Spring*; and the *Larghetto*, written in the style of a *siciliano*, might almost be a discarded fragment

from *Pulcinella*. The use of traditional figures for the accompaniment in the *Moderato* and *Vivo* provides a foretaste of the new style of writing that was to be more fully developed in *Mavra*; and the way the harmonies of right and left hands sometimes fail to fit, both in these two pieces and in the final *Pesante*, shows that Stravinsky was starting to explore the new harmonic territory opened out by the final chord of the Symphonies.

At the end of the winter of 1921, Stravinsky came to Paris for the Russian Ballet season, which included the revival of *The Rite of Spring* with Massine's new choreography. Being requested about this time by a Paris theatre to provide incidental music for a music-hall sketch, he orchestrated four pieces (March, Waltz, Polka and Gallop) from his collection of easy piano duets. Let the sequel be told in his own words: 'Although my orchestra was more than modest, the composition as I wrote it was given only at the first few performances. When I went to see the sketch again a month later, I found that there was but little left of what I had written. Everything was completely muddled; some instruments were lacking or had been replaced by others, and the music itself as executed by this pitiful band had become unrecognisable.' Stravinsky had learnt his lesson, and the sketch was immediately withdrawn.

Four years later, he orchestrated the remaining piano duets (Andante, Napolitana, Española and Balalaika), and these were published as Suite No. 1.

Later that spring (1921) he joined the Russian Ballet in Spain and conducted a command performance of *Petrushka* before King Alfonso at the Theatre Royal, Madrid. Easter was spent in Diaghilev's company at Seville. Throughout the *Semana Santa* the two friends mingled with the crowds; and once again Stravinsky was deeply moved by the mystic fervour of the Spanish people. Despite travel agencies, guides and all the vulgarity of modern publicity, their half pagan, half Christian fêtes seemed to have lost no part of their freshness and vitality.

The greater part of the summer was spent in London. The cordial reception given to *The Rite of Spring*, first at a Queen's Hall concert conducted by Goossens and later at the theatre as a ballet, provided some consolation for the fiasco of the Symphonies of Wind Instruments. The ballet season was successful, the weather fine; and a continuous round of luncheons, teas, receptions and week-end parties kept him busy. Nevertheless, there was sufficient time to make plans for the future. In the first place, Diaghilev wanted to revive Chaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*; and Stravinsky, who was a devoted

admirer of the composer, agreed to help with the orchestration of some of the numbers that had been cut out at the first performance in St. Petersburg and were missing from the full score. The second project, which originated in the admiration Diaghilev and Stravinsky shared for Pushkin, led to the composition of the *buffa* opera, *Mavra*.

12

'*Mavra*' and the *Octet*

The remainder of the summer of 1921 was spent with his family at Anglet between Bayonne and Biarritz. There he made a virtuoso piano version of *Petrushka* for Arthur Rubinstein (to whom he had previously dedicated his *Piano-Rag-Music*). In doing so, he not unnaturally returned to his original conception of the work and chose the Russian Dance and *Petrushka's Cry* (Tableau II of the ballet) as his first two movements. To these he added the bulk of the music of the last Tableau, with the exception of the coda (*Petrushka's death*), and brought the work to an end where in the orchestral score a long-held trumpet note preludes the irruption of the puppets among the maskers.¹ (It should be added that he has also authorised concert performances of the orchestral score with the same cuts as in this piano version, subject to the inclusion of the episode of the Showman's sleight-of-hand as introduction to the Russian Dance.)

In the autumn, after beginning the composition of *Mavra*, he settled at Biarritz, which was to be his home for the next three years; but this *opera buffa* had to be interrupted to allow him to carry out the various pieces of orchestration that Diaghilev had commissioned for the revival of *The Sleeping Beauty*, and when these were ready, he came over to London to attend the first performance at the Alhambra.

Diaghilev had prepared this revival with loving care. The scenery and costumes had been entrusted to Bakst; Vera Trefilova, Olga Spessiva and Lubov Egorova were engaged to dance the title role on alternate nights; and the part of the Wicked Fairy was taken by Carlotta Brianza, who had created the role of Princess Aurora at the ballet's original production at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, in 1889.² Nothing was neglected to make the occasion a resounding success.

¹ *Petrushka*, section 125.

² With the exception of one performance (on January 5, 1922) when, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his first public appearance, the part of the Wicked Fairy was played by Cecchetti, who had created it at the original St. Petersburg production.

Although Diaghilev had always been an ardent admirer of Chaikovsky, some of his recent ballet productions had shown a nervous, if not snobbish, anxiety to keep step with the post-war *avant-garde* movement in Paris; and it was thought that his public might not be altogether prepared for a return to the sentimental music of Chaikovsky and the classical choreography of Petipa. To reassure the intelligentsia, Stravinsky was prevailed upon to write a warm tribute in a letter to Diaghilev from Paris dated October 10. This appeared in *The Times* a week later and was reprinted in the ballet programme.

In it he said: 'It gives me great happiness to know that you are producing that masterpiece *The Sleeping Beauty* by our great and beloved Chaikovsky. It makes me doubly happy. In the first place, it is a personal joy, for this work appears to me as the most authentic expression of that period in our Russian life which we call the "Petersburg Period", and which is stamped upon my memory with the morning vision of the Imperial sleighs of Alexander III, the giant Emperor, and his giant coachman, and the immense joy that awaited me in the evening, the performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

'It is, further, a great satisfaction to me as a musician to see produced a work of so direct a character at a time when so many people, who are neither simple, nor naïve, nor spontaneous, seek in their art simplicity, "poverty", and spontaneity. Chaikovsky in his very nature possessed these three gifts to the fullest extent. That is why he never feared to let himself go, whereas the prudes, whether *raffinés* or academic, were shocked by the frank speech, free from artifice, of his music.

'Chaikovsky possessed the power of *melody*, centre of gravity in every symphony, opera or ballet composed by him. It is absolutely indifferent to me that the quality of his melody was sometimes unequal. The fact is that he was a creator of *melody*, which is an extremely rare and precious gift. . . .

'I have just read again the score of this ballet. I have instrumented some numbers of it which had remained unorchestrated and unperformed. I have spent some days of intense pleasure in finding therein again and again the same feeling of freshness, inventiveness, ingenuity, and vigour. And I warmly desire that your audiences of all countries may feel this work as it is felt by me, a Russian musician.'

A few days after the first performance, he amplified his feeling of admiration for Chaikovsky in an interview with a correspondent of *The Times*. He made it clear that in his view *The Sleeping Beauty*

combined vivid imagination of the stage action with true orchestral imagination. 'An example of this,' he said, 'is the entrance of the Princess to trumpets and drums. This could have been done quite well with harps and muted strings, if only a sentimental effect had been wanted; but Chaikovsky's conception of the nature of the entrance was something very different. Every incident, and every entrance is always individual to the character concerned, and every number has its own special character.'

Artistically, this revival of *The Sleeping Beauty* was an enormous success and to some extent may be said to have laid the foundations of the later popularity of Chaikovsky's ballets in this country; but, financially, it was a disaster, from which it took Diaghilev years to recover. The pre-production expenses and the running costs were so high that after a comparatively short run he found himself faced with bankruptcy. The London season ended abruptly; and the ballet was never revived by him again in its entirety, though a potted version of the last act entitled *Aurora's Wedding* (in Benois's setting for *Le Pavillon d'Armide* instead of the Bakst décor) remained in the Russian Ballet's repertory until 1929.

Once back in Biarritz, Stravinsky threw himself with enthusiasm into the task of completing *Mavra*. A young Russian poet, Boris Kochno, who was later to become Diaghilev's assistant and secretary, was responsible for the verse libretto of this one-act opera, which is based on a rhymed story of Pushkin called *The Little House in Kolomna*. The action takes place in a small Russian town at the time of Charles X. The curtain rises on the living-room of a middle-class family, where Parasha, the daughter, is working at her embroidery. Her neighbour, Basil, a handsome hussar, appears outside the window; and the lovers sing a duet. When he has gone, Parasha's mother enters and laments the fact that she is without a servant, her old cook Thecla having recently died. Parasha goes off to see if she can engage someone; and while she is away, a neighbour calls for a gossip about the weather, servants and clothes. Parasha returns with the hussar disguised as a cook whose name (so he tells them) is Mavra. The mother is delighted; and after all four have united in a quartet praising the virtues of the departed Thecla, the neighbour takes her leave and the mother goes upstairs to dress before going out. The lovers, left alone, sing an impassioned love duet. Then Parasha joins her mother for a walk. With the house empty, Mavra decides it would be expedient to shave; but mother and daughter return unexpectedly early from their walk and discover the new cook in the middle of this unsuitable operation. In her

alarm, the mother faints, but recovers consciousness in time to see the hussar leap out of the window and to hear her daughter crying after him 'Basil ! Basil !' as the curtain falls.

The clue to this composition is to be found in Stravinsky's letter to Diaghilev about the London revival of *The Sleeping Beauty*. There he says: 'Chaikovsky's music, which does not appear specifically Russian to everybody, is often more profoundly Russian than music which has long since been awarded the facile label of Muscovite picturesqueness. This music is quite as Russian as Pushkin's verse or Glinka's song.' And when the score of the opera was published, he dedicated it 'to the memory of Pushkin, Glinka and Chaikovsky'. In the third lecture of his *Musical Poetics*, he makes his intention crystal clear. 'My opera *Mavra* was conceived because of a natural sympathy I have always felt for the melodic language, the vocal style and conventions of the old Russo-Italian opera. This sympathy inevitably led me back to a tradition, which was thought to be lost, at a moment when the attention of musical circles was wholly concentrated on lyrical drama, which represented no tradition from the historical point of view and answered no musical necessity. . . . The music of *Mavra* is in the direct tradition of Glinka and Dargomijsky. I wanted merely to try my hand at this living form of *opera buffa*, which was so eminently appropriate for the story by Pushkin I had chosen as basis for the action . . . and we have had to wait a hundred years before we could appreciate the freshness of this tradition, with its bracing atmosphere, so suitable for delivering us from all the miasmata of lyrical drama, whose essential vacuity cannot be disguised by even the most pretentious tomb.'

Mavra is an opera without recitative, made up of an uninterrupted sequence of airs and vocal ensembles. Considerable use is made of traditional accompanying figures—for instance, Parasha's opening air has a vamped accompaniment, consisting almost entirely of chords of the tonic, dominant and sub-dominant—but Stravinsky rings new changes on this device by giving the voices and accompaniment leave to range independently through the harmonic field, and it is usually only at the end of a complete phrase or episode that an emphatic cadence brings about full harmonic coincidence. In complete contrast to the songs of the 'Russian period', the vocal line is amazingly free and fluent. The new method of accompaniment is much more genial and gratifying, both to singers and audience, than the former harsh and crabbed attempts to give the vocal part relief by a shading of upper and lower acciaccaturas. The melodic flow of the *bel canto* continually spills over into the orchestra, which doubles,

imitates and develops various phrases and, in some cases,¹ even treats them to a brief *fugato*.

In his study of Stravinsky's music, Paul Collaer gives an excellent analysis of this opera and claims that it has four distinct melodic sources: (i) Russian occidental melody as typified in the operas of Glinka and Dargomijsky; (ii) classical Italian melody; (iii) gypsy melody, with its abrupt contrasts of short and long notes and its tendency for cadences to close on the dominant; and (iv) a brief touch of chromatic melody reminiscent of the 1918 *Ragtime*. The first is to be found in Parasha's air at the beginning of the opera; the second in the music devoted to Parasha's mother and the neighbour; the third is typical of the hussar, though all three styles seem to coalesce in his final air (*Lento—poco rubato*).² As for the fourth, it is virtually confined to the coda of the opera.

Although the tonality of the work is everywhere established by a strong and vigorous bass, the wealth of modulation within the various episodes is something quite new in Stravinsky's music. These changes of key are often ranged round a polar note—for instance, the G that dominates the Overture appears in different episodes as tonic (of G minor), mediant (of E flat major), dominant (of C); and although the Overture modulates ultimately to B flat to lead directly into Parasha's opening air (in B flat minor), the G makes an occasional appearance there too as major sixth in the vocal line. This device gives a feeling of variety subject to control; and, further, the occasional use of implied but suspended modulations adds considerably to the tension.³

Metrically, the work appears almost orthodox. The restless time changes of *The Rite of Spring*, *The Soldier's Tale* and the Symphonies of Wind Instruments—which, after all, were sometimes no more than a rather tiresome device to fit the barline to the phrase—have almost completely disappeared; and what the work loses in metrical complexity, it gains in rhythmic subtlety.

The score is written for 34 instrumentalists: 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 1 cor anglais, 4 clarinets, 2 bassoons; 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 tuba; timpani; 1 first violin, 1 second, 1 viola, 3 'cellos and 3 double-basses. This is virtually a wind orchestra, the role of the lower strings being confined to reinforcing the regular march of the bass, and the solo violins and viola being discreetly used to accentuate, shade and bind the wind parts.

¹ Cf. the music allotted to the mother at sections 28–42.

² Section 140.

³ Cf. in particular the climaxes of the love duet in waltz time (*Tempo comodo—alla breve*) one bar before section 128 and one bar before section 131.

Stravinsky finished the score at Biarritz in March 1922; but, while staying in his Paris *pied-à-terre* at the Salle Pleyel before the first performance, he added a short Overture. This opens and closes with a brief passage like a sennet, framing a central episode which is founded on some of the motifs associated with the hussar. It seems not inappropriate that this sennet-like passage should be closely related to the middle section of the March that prefaces *Reynard*, for Diaghilev had decided that both works should receive their first performance together at the Paris Opera House on June 3. The scenery and costumes for *Reynard* were designed by Larionov; those for *Mavra* by Survage. Bronislava Nijinska, the sister of Vaslav, was responsible for the choreography of *Reynard*. Ansermet conducted the ballet, and Fitelberg the opera.

Stravinsky himself was pleased with the choreography of *Reynard*. In his own words, 'Nijinska had admirably seized the spirit of its mountebank buffoonery. She displayed such a wealth of ingenuity, so many fine points, and so much satirical verve, that the effect was irresistible. She herself, playing the part of the Fox, created an unforgettable figure.' But, despite all the care lavished on these two productions, neither was a success with the public, for nothing could redeem the irretrievable fundamental error of producing two intimate chamber works in the totally inappropriate and overpowering setting of the Paris Opera House. In this connection it is interesting to remember that *The Little House in Kolomna*, though written when Pushkin was at the height of his powers, was received by the Russian public with similar suspicion and lack of enthusiasm.

Reynard was subsequently revived in 1929; but *Mavra*, with all its unpretentious charm and humour, continues to be undeservedly neglected. It is true that fairly successful concert performances have been given; and it was even rumoured about 1930 that Stravinsky intended to substitute instruments for the voice parts—an idea that fortunately came to nothing. But that does not alter the fact that there is bound to be an element of betrayal in any concert performance of a work originally intended for the stage. When the right conditions for the adequate performance of chamber opera have been created in this country, *Mavra* should come into its own; but it will then be essential for a new translation of Kochno's libretto to be prepared in easy idiomatic English to avoid the bathos of lines like

What's the trysting time and place?
—Well, tomorrow suits me nicely.
Foundry alehouse, eight precisely.

or, at the play's climax when the hussar leaps out of the window, the stilted utterance of the neighbour

Let's catch him and hold him steady

instead of the obvious cry '*Help! help! stop thief!*'

After *Mavra*, Stravinsky decided to concentrate on a symphonic composition, and he had completed the first movement before its instrumental shape became clear to him. Once again his predilection for wind instruments led him to avoid the strings, and he decided to lay out his new work for flute, clarinet, two bassoons, two trumpets and two trombones. The composition of this Octet, which was interrupted by the necessity to complete the instrumentation of *The Wedding*, was finished in May 1923 and performed for the first time (with Stravinsky himself as conductor) at a Kussevitsky concert in the Paris Opera House the following autumn.

There are three movements: a Sinfonia (*Allegro moderato*) with a *Lento* introduction; an Air (*Andantino*) with five variations; and a Finale (*Moderato*). Each is well constructed, but the second deserves special attention, as it is the first time Stravinsky has used this particular form.

The Air itself consists of a 33-note theme divided into seven phrases. At its exposition, it is accompanied by staccato chords on the off-beats. In the first variation, the first four phrases of the theme appear, note for note, a semitone higher; the remaining three phrases a tone higher. The time values of the notes are equalised; and the first five phrases are accompanied by rushing scale passages. The eight notes of the last two phrases are compressed into the final two bars of the variation so that notes 29 and 30 overlap notes 27 and 28. The last note of the theme (33) is only to be found in the opening chord of the second variation. This is in march time. Fresh material is introduced between the phrases of the theme, of which a few notes are now missing, and one note is raised a semitone. The theme itself starts by being a fifth higher than in the original Air and then begins to lose altitude, dropping first by a fourth, later by a semitone, and ending in the same key as the Air (D major). The first variation is then repeated by way of interlude, and its cadence varied to lead to the third variation, which is in waltz time. The theme, now a minor third above the key of the original Air, is entrusted to the trumpet, but only the first half of it is developed. The waltz leads directly into the fourth variation (in 2/4 time). Here again only the first part of the theme (now in its original key) is

developed by the brass over a two-part invention, played by the bassoons, which is closely related to the opening phrase of the theme. The first variation is repeated again and leads to the fifth variation, a slow *fugato* in which the first two phrases of the theme (still in its original key) are inverted and developed in counterpoint that ranges from two or six parts. At the end of the variation, the flute has a quickened cadence (solo), which leads without break into the Finale.

One other part of the work calls for special mention—namely, the coda, where a sequence of chords of different time values is fitted into a 2/4 framework. At first, the quaver values of the successive chords are 3, 3, 2; each group of three chords fitting into two bars of the music. But presently the values change; and a group of 3, 4, 4, 3, 2 is fitted into four bars; and one of 3, 4, 5 into three bars. Short breathing spaces are introduced between the phrases; and over this slightly breathless, palpitating background the solo trumpets enunciate in turn a theme that harks back to the first subject of the Sinfonia.

This Octet gives an impression of extremely solid design and brilliant tone colour. It is the first work in which Stravinsky shows himself to be what had only been guessed at before—a real master of counterpoint.

13

The Concerto and other Compositions for Piano

Stravinsky's attention as a composer now began to focus on the possibilities of the piano as a solo instrument. Although originally trained as a pianist, he had written little piano music since the Four Studies of 1908. The two sets of Easy Duets and *The Five Fingers* were possibly intended mainly as exercises for his own children; and the *Piano-Rag-Music* and Three Movements from *Petrushka* were virtuoso pieces for Arthur Rubinstein. It has already been mentioned how the composition of the Octet was interrupted by the need to complete the instrumentation of *The Wedding* with its quartet of pianos; but although he seems to have lost interest to some extent in the music of that ballet cantata by the time of its first performance—writing to him a few years later, Ramuz said, 'Maybe you no longer like *The Wedding*, Stravinsky: but that's your right'—he was now anxious further to explore the possibilities of piano technique and accordingly planned a Concerto for piano and wind orchestra with the addition of double-basses and timpani. This was written at

Biarritz in the autumn and winter of 1923-4 and comprises three movements: I. a kind of toccata (*Allegro*) framed by a slow introduction and coda; II. a *Larghissimo* (composed while he was reading one of Leskov's short stories); and III. a final *Allegro*, with a coda based partly on the *Largo* introduction to the first movement.

The toccata is conceived on a big scale. The *Largo* introduction, with its dotted rhythm (so characteristic of seventeenth century French overtures), is entrusted to the wind orchestra; and the piano enters when the time changes to *Allegro*. The main toccata subject appears as a three-part piano invention somewhat in the manner of J. S. Bach—twice as a solo,¹ but more frequently with orchestral elaboration—and from it is derived a continual stream of fertile musical ideas. The orchestra for the most part follows and accompanies the *concertante* piano. Sometimes it merely emphasises the music's main outline; sometimes it imitates the piano part, proceeding occasionally by ellipsis and augmentation;² and once it initiates a secondary theme of its own.³ On two occasions the piano tries to run away and shake off the impotent stutterings of the brass. The first time⁴ it is led firmly back to a literal reprise of the opening bars of the *Allegro*; but the second time it⁵ succeeds in breaking loose and plunges into a headlong cadenza, where the device of chords in the right hand alternating with octaves in the bass is treated with a frenzy of syncopation that recalls the violin cadenza in the Triumphant March of the Devil in *The Soldier's Tale*. The piano is finally called to order by the orchestra's massive restatement of the opening *Largo*, which it accompanies with servile arpeggios.

The slow movement opens with a somewhat viscous theme, enunciated first by the piano and then by the orchestra and accompanied on both occasions by thick sluggish chords. A splodgy cadenza (*poco rubato*) for piano solo leads to momentary relief in the form of a brief middle section with two contrasted subjects for orchestra. The first of these on its second appearance is accompanied by a subsidiary theme derived from the toccata.⁶ After a restatement of the cadenza, there is a condensed recapitulation of the opening episode.

The final cadence of the *Larghissimo*, played about three times as fast, forms the opening bar of the third movement. This, from the outset, seems remarkably unsure of itself. At first, a little two-bar phrase, which might be the beginning of a fugal subject, is banded

¹ Sections 11 and 33.

² E.g. sections 8 and 30.

³ Sections 13, 21 and 25.

⁴ Section 17.

⁵ Section 38.

⁶ Section 55.

about between piano and orchestra; and at the same time the piano works up a piece of busy, fussy, rather empty figuration. A kind of march ensues;¹ but this is quickly abandoned, the piano flies off at a tangent and, after a descending run of 24 semiquavers—with the accents at first on every third semiquaver (1, 4, 7 etc.) and then on every second (19, 21, 23)—to give the erroneous impression that there is going to be a change of time, produces a new subject (*Tempo primo*),² which is the most promising piece of thematic material that has yet appeared and which (it is hardly surprising to find) is also closely related to the toccata of the first movement. This is given out twice by the piano solo, before the orchestra can be induced to take it over and play it in augmentation.³ Even then, the course of its development is uncertain and leads unexpectedly to a *fugato* marked 'majestueux',⁴ where a new and somewhat pompous theme—Elgarian both in manner and key (A flat major)—makes four brief fugal entries in the orchestra and then completely disappears. There follows a disruptive passage marked *Agitato*,⁵ in which the music begins to disintegrate; and after that, the coda. This is in two parts: the first (*Lento*) harks back to the introduction to the first movement; there is a brief pause, and then in eight bars marked *Vivo* the piano, with both hands playing loud and strongly accented octaves, makes a final reference to the theme derived from the toccata. The orchestra accompanies with chords on the off-beats; but piano and orchestra manage to finish together, thanks to the interpolation of a penultimate 5/8 bar—a device that Stravinsky had used before, in the Royal March in *The Soldier's Tale*.

The ultimate effect of the Piano Concerto is that of a gradual declension. The toccata is conceived on such a big scale and is so satisfactorily constructed that it is not surprising to find that, after completing it, Stravinsky's intense concentration began to relax. The whole work, however, is distinguished at times by an almost barbaric fierceness that breaks through the crust of the formal structure and shows that, despite his newly acclaimed affiliation to the Apollonian principle, the old Dionysian blood still flowed hot in his veins.

Shortly before the Concerto was completed, Kussevitsky, who had agreed to give the work its first performance at one of his Paris Opera House symphony concerts and to whose wife it is dedicated, called on Stravinsky at Biarritz and suggested he should play the

¹ Section 65.

² Three bars after section 68.

⁵ Section 84.

³ Section 75.

⁴ Section 80.

solo part himself. The composer was tempted by the proposal. It would give him a chance to revive his piano-playing technique, to establish an authoritative interpretation of his work and also to augment his income. He had already started a subsidiary career as conductor of his own works by carrying out engagements that winter in Belgium and Spain; and the idea of appearing on the main concert platforms of Europe and America as executant as well as conductor appealed to him. He accordingly began to practise hard, loosening his fingers 'by playing a lot of Czerny exercises'; and the first performance took place on May 22, 1924, at a concert devoted entirely to his compositions.

In his *Chronicle*, he has described how, on this occasion, stage-fright led to a temporary lapse of memory: 'Having finished the first movement of the Concerto, just before the beginning of the *Largo* which opens with a piano solo, I suddenly realised I had entirely forgotten how it started. I whispered this to Kussevisky. He glanced at the score and hummed the first notes. That was enough to restore my balance and enable me to attack the second movement.'

Stravinsky reserved to himself for the next five years or so the sole rights of playing the Concerto; and during that period he performed it more than forty times in the course of tours that took him to Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Yugoslavia and England, as well as France. He also spent two months touring the United States early in 1925, visiting New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit and Cincinnati, and has left it on record that, 'side by side with a pronounced weakness for the freakish and sensational', he found 'a real taste for the art of music as manifested by the many societies devoted to musical culture and the magnificent orchestras munificently endowed by private individuals'.

Since these concert tours took up a considerable amount of his time and energy, and he had also recently been busy making transcriptions of some of his works for mechanical piano,¹ it became increasingly difficult for him to concentrate on composition without being interrupted by engagements of one kind or another. It is not surprising therefore to find a slight diminution in his output during the next fifteen years.

The Sonata for solo piano was written at Biarritz during the latter part of 1924. It is dedicated to the Princess Edmond de Polignac, in whose Paris house many private auditions of his works

¹ Cf. Appendix B. The original Pleyela rolls were transferred to the Duo-Art (Aeolian) Co., London, in 1927.

had been given prior to public performance, and consists of three movements—a brisk opening movement in C major, a slow movement (*Adagietto*) in A flat major and a fast final movement in E minor. Though while working on it he deliberately re-examined a number of Beethoven's piano sonatas, he did not adopt the usual classical form for the opening *allegro*, but explained that he was using the title 'sonata' in the sense of an essay in sound, in accordance with Rousseau's definition in the *Dictionary of Music* (1767) where he says, 'the Sonata is, for instruments, very much what the Cantata is for the voice'.

The first and last movements are related by the use of material common to both. The first opens with a 32-note theme arranged in quaver triplets (6/8), which recurs (in whole or in part) several times during the course of the movement: the same theme appears in the coda to the last movement, but there it is grouped in semiquaver quadruplets (2/4) and its character is disguised by the altered incidence of the accents.

The main interest of the first movement consists in the manipulation of conventional figures of accompaniment and their relation to the melodic line. The harmonic implications of the right and left hands often fail to coincide; and this gives the music, despite its metrical rigidity, a curiously blurred registration. Ultimately this is corrected by a sympathetic ear—just as the eye, watching a certain type of trick film, automatically corrects the double exposure used in alternate frames to soften the jerky effect of movement photographed as a sequence of stills.

The *Adagietto*, a lyrical movement of great charm, is embellished with trills, runs and much fanciful tracery and reveals traces of Stravinsky's preoccupation with the early sonatas of Beethoven.

The third movement is a bustling invention, written mainly in two parts. The principal subject is enunciated solo and appears later accompanied by itself in augmentation. Much of the subsequent figuration is derived from its opening phrases. With the exception of the curiously vacillating and seemingly purposeless middle section, the movement gives an impression of taut, muscular vigour.

It is notable that, throughout the Sonata, recapitulation plays an important part in closing the formal structure of each movement; but literal repetition (which was a feature of the Finale of the Octet and the first movement of the Piano Concerto) is avoided. At each separate appearance, the material receives new touches and slight variations which serve to keep it fresh.

Towards the end of 1924, finding that the winter gales got on his nerves, he moved from Biarritz to Nice, exchanging the Atlantic Ocean for the Mediterranean Sea; and there, shortly after returning from his American concert tour, he composed his *Serenade in A* for piano, which he dedicated to his wife. The title is something of a misnomer. Apparently he wished to imitate the eighteenth century type of *Nachtmusik* 'which was usually commissioned by patron-princes for various festive occasions and included, as did the suites, an indeterminate number of pieces'; but by deciding to write it for solo piano, he completely ignored the *al fresco* nature of the instrumentation, which is so typical, for example, of Mozart's *Nachtmusik* or of a modern work like Benjamin Britten's *Serenade* (1944) for tenor, horn and strings.

Stravinsky's intention was that the four pieces that make up the *Serenade in A* should represent some of the more typical moments connected with the eighteenth century musical festivals referred to above. The opening Hymn was to be a solemn entry; the Romanza, 'a solo of ceremonial homage paid by the artist to the guests'; the Rondoletto, a dance; and the Cadenza Finala, a kind of 'ornate signature with numerous, carefully inscribed flourishes'. It is perhaps more satisfactory to forget this somewhat fanciful programme description and to consider the *Serenade* simply as a suite of four contrasted pieces.

The first part of the Hymn has the same sort of massive simplicity and grandeur that was later to be so effectively employed in the opening chorus of *Oedipus Rex*. The latter part¹ provides a good example of how Stravinsky may take a straightforward arpeggio accompaniment proceeding in waves and, by careful manipulation of the inner parts—sometimes accelerating, sometimes retarding the natural note changes—succeed in endowing a simple harmonic device with all sorts of contrapuntal implications.

The Romanza opens and closes with a cadenza that seems to call for a dry, cimbalom-like tone from the pianist. For the rest, its part-writing relies mainly on the contrast of simultaneous *sostenuto* and *staccato* playing for its effect.

The Rondoletto is a dynamic two-part invention, gingered up by occasional accentuation of the off-beats. The main A major theme in the right hand is accompanied by rather turgid and close-set arpeggios (in C sharp minor) in the bass; and although the separate

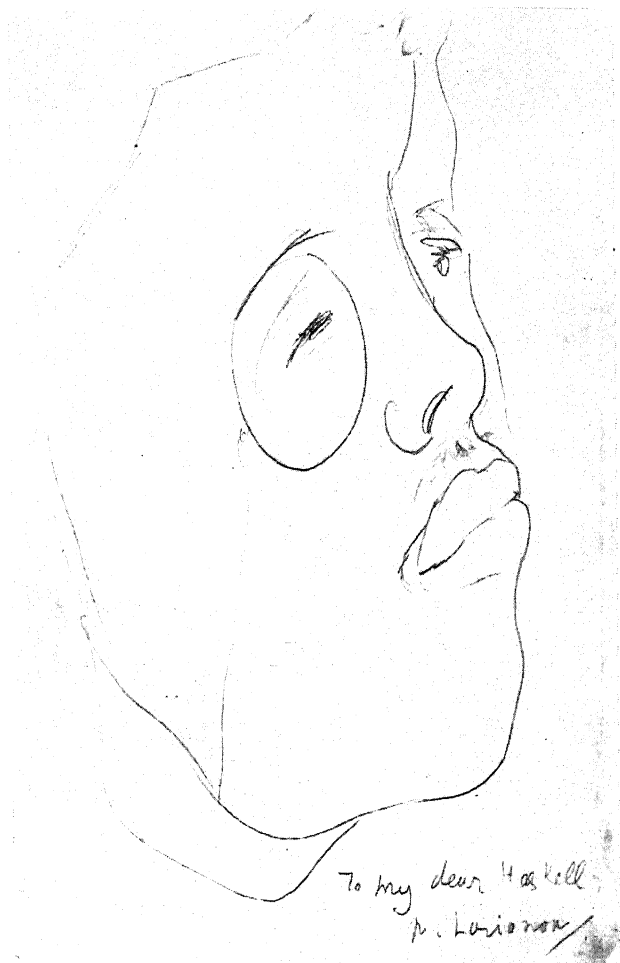
¹ In one bar, a change of time from 6/8 to 7/8 is not marked—an unusual omission on Stravinsky's part, which may be due to a printer's error. There are numerous mistakes in the early impressions of the Sonata and the reduction of the Piano Concerto for two pianos.



Lipnitzki
STRAVINSKY: rehearsing the *Piano-Rag-Music* (1924).



STRAVINSKY'S RIGHT HAND



DIAGHILEV: drawing by Larionov.

episodes have something of the character of a *moto perpetuo*, the piece as a whole is not nearly so effective as the last movement of the Sonata.

The Cadenza Finala, which was the first part of the *Serenade* to be composed, is a delightful fantasy on a kind of descending chimes motif—quite different from Stravinsky's other bell effects, such as the Mussorgsky-like passage in his early song *Spring*, the Magic Carillon in *The Fire Bird* and the bell episodes in the Symphonies of Wind Instruments. The texture is closely knit and fully justifies Jean Cocteau's comment in his *Lettre à Jacques Maritain* (1926): "It is impossible to dip into this Suite. Drop one stitch, and you lose the thread and listen out of pure politeness."

Just as the tonality of *Mavra* was to a great extent built up round G, so A is the *Serenade's* tonic pole. It appears at various places as dominant, major and minor third and tonic; and each of the first three movements ends with a halo of overtones caused by depressing one or more of the A keys on the piano, thereby raising the dampers without actually striking the strings.

Since the piano technique of the first two decades of the twentieth century was dominated mainly by the romantic impressionism of Debussy and Scriabin, it is not surprising that these compositions of Stravinsky's, in which the piano is treated primarily as an instrument of percussion, should have found slow and grudging acceptance. Despite a growing tendency towards placidity of temper and discipline of form, the music still has its moments of intense disquiet; and the atmosphere of the Piano Concerto is certainly troubled by the distant rumblings of the storm that swept through *The Rite of Spring*. Indeed, Cortot says that 'in many of Stravinsky's works, the piano acquires an aspect of inclement beauty, of which no musician has ever caught a glimpse so far'.

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'Oedipus' and 'Apollo'

On his tour to the Hebrides in 1773, Dr. Johnson visited Slate in the Isle of Skye; and Boswell relates how, after examining the English inscription on the Macdonald monument in the church, he commented that it 'should have been in Latin, as everything intended to be universal and permanent should be'.

Similar thoughts were in Stravinsky's head when, in the summer of 1925, he began to project a new work to be carried out on a big

scale. He had tackled nothing really ambitious since *The Wedding* and was now anxious to compose an opera or oratorio on some familiar subject with a text that would not necessarily have to be translated into three or more languages if it were to be performed throughout Europe and America. The idea of using Latin for this purpose came to him, not from Boswell's *Journal*, but from Joergensen's *St. Francis of Assisi*, a copy of which he picked up at a bookshop in Genoa when returning from Venice where he had been playing his Sonata at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival. In it he read how the Saint, though his natural tongue was Provençal, used French on all solemn occasions. 'For him, French was the language of poetry, the language of religion, the language of his most precious memories and his most solemn hours, the language to which he had recourse when his heart was too full to express himself in his native tongue. . . . French was essentially the maternal language of his soul. Whenever he spoke it, his friends knew he was happy.' Pursuing this analogy, Stravinsky decided on the choice of Latin for his text, since this would have the advantage of providing him with 'a medium not dead, but turned to stone, and so monumentalised as to have become immune from all risk of vulgarisation'.

All might have been well, if a suitable Latin text had already existed. But no—the subject chosen was *Oedipus Rex*; and for his purpose he needed a kind of simplified libretto so that the action could be reduced to a minimum, the words repeated as often as the musical exigencies demanded, and the resulting opera produced on the lines of an oratorio. A special version had therefore to be prepared; and at this point he thought of Cocteau, who for many years had expressed a wish to work with him, but whose projects of collaboration, from *David* onwards, had so far come to nothing. Late in 1922, Cocteau had produced a stage contraction of Sophocles's *Antigone*, which he himself compared to 'an attempt to photograph Greece from an aeroplane'. Stravinsky was enthusiastic about this adaptation; but André Gide, writing in his *Journal* (January 16, 1923), was more grudging of praise. He called it 'beautiful despite Cocteau rather than because of him' and went on to say that Stravinsky had shown a similar attitude to an established masterpiece when, being invited to collaborate with Gide over his translation of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, he agreed, subject to 'Antony being given the uniform of an Italian *bersagliere*'. At this point, Gide adds laconically: '*La patine est la récompense des chefs-d'oeuvre.*'

Cocteau was delighted at the idea of collaborating with Stravinsky. He set to work at once, drafting the text in French, and it was then handed over to Jean Daniélou to be translated into Latin. The resulting libretto, with its muscular compression and dignified simplicity, is a masterly contraction of the tragedy by Sophocles; and those who are interested can find traces of Cocteau's original draft in the fourth act of the play he subsequently wrote on the Oedipus theme, *The Infernal Machine* (1934). As Latin, however, the text is synthetic, unidiomatic in style, and betrays a preponderantly Gallic cast of thought; but there are several felicitous touches, such as the chorus's greeting to Creon '*Audituri te salutant*' and Oedipus's boast of '*Ego exul exsulto*' just before the final revelation of his identity. Stravinsky's scansion of the Latin syllables is sometimes rather unorthodox.

The two collaborators decided for the time being to keep their work secret, as they intended it to form part of the 1927 celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of Diaghilev's theatrical activities. Early in the new year, Stravinsky received the first instalment of the Latin translation; and on January 11, 1926 (according to Schaeffner), he entered in one of his notebooks a chord and below it the word *Serva* in triple rhythm. The following day, he noted down the beginning of Oedipus's first solo, and between the 13th and 15th completed the whole of the opening chorus. Creon's air *Respondit deus* dates from April of the same year; Tiresias's oracle *Dicere non possum* from August; and Jocasta's air *Nonn' erubescite* from October. The duet between Jocasta and Oedipus was finished on November 16; the last chorus, in the middle of the following March; and the orchestration was completed on May 10, 1927, at four in the morning.

For the purpose of this opera-oratorio, Cocteau divided the action (which is continuous) into two acts and six episodes, as follows:

- Act I.* 1. *Chorus* The men of Thebes lament the plague that rages in the town.
Air Oedipus promises help.
2. *Air* On his return from Delphi, Creon reports that, according to the oracle, the unpunished murderer of their former king, Laius, is living in their midst and must be discovered and punished.
Air Oedipus boasts of his ability in solving riddles. He will track down the criminal himself.

3. *Chorus* Invocation of Athene, Artemis and Apollo.
Air Blind Tiresias, the fountain of truth, at first refuses to reveal the clue to the criminal's whereabouts: but, being taunted by Oedipus, finally announces that the king's assassin is a king.
Air Oedipus resents this and accuses Creon and Tiresias of plotting against him.
Chorus The men of Thebes hail the entry of Jocasta.

Act II. 4. Repetition of the previous *Chorus*.

Air Jocasta casts doubt on the general veracity of oracles and mentions that in any case her former husband, Laius, was killed outside the town at the crossroads between Daulia and Delphi.

Duet While Jocasta attempts to reassure her husband, Oedipus begins to feel afraid, as he recalls that twelve years ago, on his way to Thebes from Corinth, he had killed a stranger at the same crossroads.

5. *Air* A messenger announces the death of Oedipus's reputed father, Polybus, king of Corinth, and reveals that Oedipus was only his adopted son.

Air While a shepherd confirms that he found Oedipus as a baby, abandoned on Mount Cithaeron with his feet pierced, Jocasta silently disappears.

Air To begin with, Oedipus thinks Jocasta has retired because she is ashamed of his common birth: but at last he realises the full enormity of his position—*Lux facta est*—and leaves the stage.

6. *Air* and *Chorus* The messenger's announcement, *Divinum Jocastae caput mortuum*, thrice repeated, frames three sections of a chorus bewailing Jocasta's suicide and announcing that Oedipus has put out his eyes with her golden brooch.

Chorus On his reappearance, the men of Thebes bid their king a sad farewell.

In order to spare listeners the effort of having to follow the words and recall the plot, a speaker in evening dress introduces each of the six episodes with a few words of explanation delivered in the audience's native language. It will be noted that Cocteau was able to break the action without destroying its continuity by repeating the final chorus of Act I at the beginning of Act II, a device which he used with success in his play *Orpheus* (1926), described as a tragedy in one act and an interval.

In *Oedipus Rex*, Stravinsky appears to have borrowed material from a number of widely disparate sources; but, as always, his use of it is highly individual, and, so long as the crucible of his imagination is sufficiently fired, the result is a new and original amalgam. As the work is partly an oratorio, it might be thought that there would be borrowings from Handel: but this is not so. There are, however, a number of unmistakably Russian touches. For instance, his writing for the male voice chorus—particularly the *Gloria* at the end of Act I—is often reminiscent of the music of the Orthodox Church; and it is not surprising to find that about the same time as *Oedipus Rex* he wrote a liturgical *Paternoster* for unaccompanied S.A.T.B. choir. The chorus's brief salutation to Creon¹ might be almost a literal quotation from Mussorgsky's *Boris*; and the messenger's air, *Reppereram in monte puerum Oedipoda*,² has the modal rusticity of a Russian folk-song and is given the same irregular metrical treatment as was so typical of Stravinsky's 'Russian period'. On the other hand, the opening of Jocasta's air, *Nonn' erubescite reges*,³ with its vamped accompaniment, recalls the manner of Verdi for a few bars; but the condensed development of both vocal line and accompaniment that follows so rapidly has little or nothing to do with Verdi's characteristic idiom. It is a logical outcome of Stravinsky's researches in *Mavra* into the Italian *buffo* style—just as the introduction to the opening chorus, *Caedit nos pestis*, with its massive, monumental, isolated phrases, represents the consolidation of an idea already adumbrated in the first bars of the Hymn of the *Serenade*.⁴

Perhaps the most interesting example of material metamorphosis is to be found in Oedipus's air, *Nonne monstrum rescituri*.⁵ Here, voice and accompaniment form a kind of diatonic two-part invention in F major; and the lack of harmonic coincidence—so characteristic of Stravinsky's style in the middle 'twenties—recalls the opening movement of the Sonata for piano. On examination, however, the voice part will be found to be almost identical with the tune of the E flat Lanner waltz used for the Ballerina's Dance in *Petrushka*.⁶ The transformation of a Styrian waltz into a Greek king's cry of defiance—whether a consciously premeditated, or an involuntary act on Stravinsky's part—is just as much a matter for

¹ Section 25.

² Section 139.

³ Section 96.

⁴ Other passages recalling the Hymn may be found, particularly at sections 9 and 10 of this chorus.

⁵ Section 152.

⁶ *Petrushka*, section 71.

speculation as the process of reversion which led Hamlet to contemplate the possibility of the noble dust of Alexander stopping a bunghole.

The main musical interest of *Oedipus Rex* is divided between the stark and sombre commentary of the male chorus and the sequence of airs for Oedipus, which reveal the path by which he passes from presumptuous pride and arrogant self-confidence to fear and humility. From the outset, a mood of prophetic fatalism marks the utterance of the chorus. The triple rhythm originally devised to accompany the word *Serva* pervades the opening episode and is insistently emphasised by the slowly pulsing bass with its triplets alternating at the interval of a minor third. The liturgical idiom of the chorus is in keeping with the religious function of Greek tragedy and provides a foil for the lay style of the lyrical airs. The work in its course describes a full circle—or, perhaps more correctly, two semi-circles—and it is not until the recapitulation of the material of the opening chorus at the end of the opera has closed the circle that all hope of Oedipus escaping from the trap that seems to have been set for him by the gods is destroyed.

Stravinsky has provided a strikingly profound psychological interpretation of Oedipus's character in musical terms. His opening air, *Liberi, vos liberabo*,¹ emphasises his superb, unbending arrogance with its high register and coloratura flourishes; and this stiff, ornate style becomes aggravated when, in response to Creon, he assumes full responsibility for the liberation of Thebes with his promise, *Ego Oedipus carmen divinabo*.² The intervention of Tiresias helps to break through his hitherto imperturbable façade; and his next air, *Invidia fortunam odit*,³ though (like a rondo) continually returning to its opening phrase, declines occasionally into a more familiar conversational style with its hissed accusation *Stipendarius es, Tiresia!* and its whining appeal to the chorus—*Amici, amici!*—not to forget his previous success in solving the riddle of the sphinx. It is not until Jocasta has launched into her rattling denunciation of all oracles—*Mentita sunt oracula*—and mentioned the murder at the crossroads that Oedipus's self-confidence is shaken. The chorus takes up the word *trivium*. Its repetition beats into his brain; and in a lower vocal register—this is one of the work's most thrilling moments—he whispers his fears to his wife, *Pavesco subito, Jocasta*. His confession—

¹ *Oedipus Rex*, section 16.

³ Section 83.

² Section 59.

COMPOSER, CONDUCTOR, PERFORMER

*Ego senem cecidi,
cum Corintho excederem,
cecidì in trivio,
cecidì, Jocasta, senem—*

is accompanied solely by three timpani. The revelations of the messenger and shepherd at first leave him bewildered, and in his air *Nonne monstrum rescituri*, there is a momentary return to his earlier arrogant style, culminating in the ornate cadenza *Ego exul exulto*: but the shrill, united accusation of messenger, shepherd and chorus—

*Laio Jocastae natus!
Peremptor Laii parentis!
Coniux Jocastae parentis!—*

leaves no further room for doubt, and his brief final air closes with the resignation of a simple falling cadence, *Lux facta est*. Light irradiates his soul, just before he decides to put out the light of his eyes.

It should be noted that in *Oedipus Rex*, for the first time since *The Nightingale*, Stravinsky uses a normal-sized symphony orchestra. His instrumentation, however, still conforms to the *concertante* style initiated in *The Song of the Nightingale*; and orchestral *tutti* are rare.

Between them, librettist and composer worked out a rather rigid stage scheme for the presentation of this opera-oratorio. A specially built-up set was devised by Theodore Stravinsky (Stravinsky's elder son) to act as an acoustic shell, project the singers' voices into the auditorium and heighten the monumental and static aspect of the work. The chorus was to be arranged in three tiers, with only their heads showing above a bas-relief of drapery; and in order that the protagonists should appear like living statues, Oedipus, Creon and Jocasta were to be given constructed costumes and masks and told to move only their arms and heads. The entries (and exits) of Creon and Jocasta were to be managed by discovering (and concealing) them with curtains. Oedipus's disappearance and reappearance at the end of Act II was to be carried out by means of a trap, and his blindness indicated by a change of mask. The only characters to be allowed to move at all freely were Tiresias, the messenger and the shepherd: the latter was to be made up to resemble the well-known statue of the Moschophoros.

Unfortunately, it proved impossible to present *Oedipus Rex* in a

stage setting—according to Stravinsky, both time and money were too short—so its first performance was in a concert version at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt, Paris, on May 30, 1927, with the composer conducting. In such conditions, it was as an oratorio rather than an opera that it was introduced to the public; and as it was preceded and followed by ballets from the Russian Ballet Company's repertory, the result was rather disconcerting, and the audience apparently found it difficult suddenly to 'concentrate on something purely auditory'. Its full dramatic quality was not revealed until it was produced under Klemperer early in 1928 at the Krolloper, Berlin, with settings and costumes designed by Ewald Dülberg; but, despite its success then, it has never won a secure place in the repertory of any opera-house—partly because, although a full-scale work from Stravinsky's point of view, it plays for little more than an hour, and the public's reluctance to patronise any dual or triple opera bill is well known and difficult to overcome.

Shortly after the Paris performance of *Oedipus Rex*, Stravinsky spent a fortnight in London, in the course of which he conducted a gala performance of the Russian Ballet in *Petrushka*, *Pulcinella* and *The Fire Bird*, which was attended by the King of Spain. It happened that during that season Lifar scored a great success dancing in *The Cat*; and, according to the account given in Lifar's *Life of Diaghilev*, Stravinsky was so impressed by his performance that after the ballet's London première he told Diaghilev he would like to write a new ballet specially for Lifar. Diaghilev was delighted; and, so far as Stravinsky was concerned, the project fitted in well with a commission he had just received from Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge to provide a ballet score for a contemporary music festival that was being organised by the Washington Library of Congress. He had been given a free hand as to subject; but it was stipulated that the ballet should not last for more than thirty minutes. In his *Chronicle*, he explains how he decided to carry out an idea that had for long attracted him: 'to compose a ballet founded on moments or episodes in Greek mythology plastically interpreted by dancing of the so-called classical school'.

As theme, he chose Apollo, leader of the Muses, and for his purpose reduced their number from nine to three: Calliope personifying poetry and rhythm, Polyhymnia representing mime, and Terpsichore the dance. After a brief prologue depicting Leto giving birth to Apollo, there is a series of nine allegorical dances. A variation for Apollo, playing his lyre, leads first to a *pas d'action* where he presents the three Muses with appropriate emblems and

then to a variation for each of the Muses in turn. A second variation for Apollo is followed by a *pas de deux* for Terpsichore and himself, a coda for the four dancers and an apotheosis in which he leads the Muses to Parnassus.

Intending *Apollo Musagetes* to be a *ballet blanc*, Stravinsky decided the music should be diatonic and should avoid the sort of effects that are obtained by contrast and variety of instrumental timbres; and in this decision (according to Schaeffner) he was fortified by the recollection that one day Derain had mentioned to him the difficulty a painter found in depicting rocks, since their resemblance to each other and lack of individuality made impossible any effect of contrast. He accordingly planned his score for string orchestra: 1st and 2nd violins, violas, 1st and 2nd 'cellos, and double basses.¹ Thereby he apparently felt that to some extent he was making amends for his comparative neglect of the strings during the last twelve years or so; and in his *Chronicle* he writes in glowing terms of his delight in composing music where 'everything revolved about the melodic principle' and in immersing himself again 'in the multi-sonorous euphony of strings and making it penetrate even the furthest fibres of the polyphonic web'.

According to Schaeffner, the chord accompanying Apollo's birth² was entered at the back of his *Oedipus Rex* notebook on July 16; and four days later the first bar of the prologue was composed. The dance of the two goddesses who attend Apollo immediately after his birth was written between July 29 and 31; and, as appears from the following letter, the first three or four movements were completed by the end of September. Writing to Lifar on September 30, Diaghilev described a recent visit he had paid to Stravinsky at Nice: 'It was an eminently satisfactory meeting. . . . After lunch he played me the first half of the new ballet. It is, of course, an amazing work, extraordinarily calm, and with a greater clarity than anything he has so far done: a filigree counterpoint round transparent, clear-cut themes, all in the major key; somehow music not of this world, but from somewhere above. It seems strange that, though the tempo of all this part is slow, yet at the same time it is perfectly adapted to dancing. There is a short fast movement in your first variation—there are to be two for you—and the opening is

¹ It is interesting to find from his *Chronicle* that when Klemperer was rehearsing the work for a concert performance in Berlin in the summer of 1929, a 16:14:10:4:4:6 disposition of the strings was found to upset the balance between the various parts. The orchestral ensemble was immediately rectified, on Stravinsky's suggestion, to 8:8:6:4:4:4.

² Section 6.

danced to an unaccompanied violin solo. Very remarkable! . . . The Adagio (*pas d'action*) has a broad theme very germane to us today; it runs concurrently in four different tempos, and yet, generally speaking, the harmony is most satisfactory. I embraced him and he said: "It's for you to produce it properly for me. I want Lifar to have all sorts of flourishes. . . ."

Diaghilev was right. Calmness, clarity and serenity are the salient characteristics of *Apollo Musagetes*, which is unique among Stravinsky's stage works in that there is no element of conflict in the action or the music.

As in the Piano Concerto, the Largo introduction to the Prologue is written in the dotted rhythm characteristic of the early French overtures. It leads to a broad diatonic theme (in E major), which is followed by Apollo's birth and the Allegro dance for the two attendant goddesses. The diatonic theme is repeated (in C major) as the goddesses lead Apollo away to Olympus at the end of the Prologue.

There is no need to analyse the remaining movements in detail. The remarkable passage in the *pas d'action* where the main theme appears simultaneously in augmentation and diminution while one of the three parts is supplemented by a canon, has already been mentioned in Diaghilev's letter. The next movement (Calliope's variation) is a curiosity; it is sub-titled 'The Alexandrine' and prefaced by the following quotation from Boileau:

*Que toujours dans vos vers le sens coupant les mots
Suspende l'hémistiche et marque le repos.*

Characteristically, the melody is, for the most part, divided into phrases of twelve notes with six accents and a heavy caesura between the lines. The second of Apollo's variations bears evidence that Stravinsky had recently been studying Bach's unaccompanied 'cello suites. Its resonant chording is particularly fine. Coming after the lively Coda, the Apotheosis restores the tranquil mood of the introduction to the Prologue, and the Olympian theme reappears (in D major). In the last six bars of the work, four different *ostinato* figures are left over and gradually run down. A dotted figure of four notes, derived from the Olympian theme and played in the high register of the violins, is repeated after intervals of three, four, five, six and finally seven crotchets. Meanwhile, the other three figures slow up, from crotchets to minims, from minims to semibreves. The result is the most serenely beautiful close to any of Stravinsky's

works since *The Wedding*. It should be noted that the final chord of B minor is almost the only minor touch in an otherwise predominantly major score.

The composition of *Apollo Musagetes* was finished by the beginning of 1928, and the première took place in Washington on April 27 with choreography by Adolphe Bolm. Its first European performance was given by the Russian Ballet at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt, Paris, on June 12, with choreography by Georges Balanchin. For this production Diaghilev insisted, despite Stravinsky's disapproval, on basing the scenery on two landscapes by the unschooled artist, André Bauchant, whose naïve work was considered to belong to the tradition of Le Douanier Rousseau. When *Apollo* was revived some years later by the New York Ballet Theatre, this setting was rightly discarded in favour of a more simplified scheme.

Although in public Diaghilev was prepared to hail *Apollo* as one of Stravinsky's 'major works, a product of true artistic maturity', he apparently decided during rehearsals that the variation for Terpsichore was too long and tedious and, according to Lifar, advised Stravinsky 'either to omit it completely, or to make a number of cuts'. On Stravinsky's refusal to do so, he ordered the variation to be omitted at the second performance on the pretext of the dancer's indisposition. When Stravinsky protested and asked for it to be put back at the next performance, Diaghilev apparently agreed: but when it came to the point, the variation was still missing, and certain informed persons in the audience began to shout their disapproval. Ultimately the variation was restored; but it is curious to find that at the first German concert performance under Klemperer in the autumn of 1928, this particular movement was still omitted. A few years later, when Stravinsky was asked to write out a number of brief musical quotations from his works to be reproduced in facsimile as chapter-headings in Domenico de' Paoli's study of his music, he chose the first five bars of this variation to represent *Apollo*.

Although the music of *Apollo* seems to be almost entirely objective, there is no doubt that Balanchin's choreography adds considerable point to the score. To take a single instance: The pauses that occur in Terpsichore's variation seem wilful and meaningless in the concert hall; whereas in the theatre it is absolutely in character that the dancer should hold her poses for a moment and that the flow of music should be arrested at the same time. In the original production, the dancing was disfigured by certain extravagances, such as the tableau at the end of the Prologue when the four legs of the two recumbent

goddesses formed a pedestal on which Apollo balanced himself prone with his arms and legs swimming in the air : but these blemishes were later removed, and the choreography was then seen in all its originality and beauty. *Apollo Musagetes* is one of the very few modern ballets of which it can be said that its music and choreography are completely classical both in conception and in execution.

INTERLUDE III

The Historical Sense

AT THIS point, it may be useful to digress for a moment and to consider Stravinsky's relation to the tradition of music.

It has been shown how he was brought up in an atmosphere of Russian nationalism and how his early reactions as a composer were conditioned by his acquaintance with the near-contemporary music of Germany and France. His major works from *The Fire Bird* to *The Wedding* bear witness to a sustained effort to evolve a personal 'Russian style' and show little evidence that as a creative artist he was then aware of the main tradition of European music. In fact, his antipathy to some of the German classical composers seems to have been particularly violent during the first World War; and Ramuz enters into a detailed explanation of the reasons that led him to attack the music of Beethoven during the period of his Swiss exile.

With *The Soldier's Tale*, however, the national barriers begin to fall; and in *Pulcinella* he plunges straight into the refreshing stream of the Italian eighteenth century tradition. From that moment, he becomes a kind of time-traveller in music. He comes to terms with Beethoven in the Piano Sonata and begins to explore the works of Bach, Glinka, Weber, Chaikovsky and many other dead composers. After these visits, his own compositions show unmistakable traces of the new friendships he has made.

His detractors have been quick to seize on this characteristic and to use it as an argument for decrying his later works as being empty, synthetic and uninspired pastiches—for instance, in *Music Ho!* (1934), Constant Lambert complains bitterly of this time-travelling habit and the way it has led to what he calls Stravinsky's 'renowned impersonations of music'—and it must be admitted that at times Stravinsky's own utterances have not been very helpful. Heinrich Strobel reports a conversation at Voreppe in the summer of 1931,¹ in the course of which the composer, after asking whether much modern music was then being performed in Berlin, complained about the public's reception of his new works: 'What am I to do? Some say they want me to write music that is shocking and provoking like my earlier works: others say that only now do I write proper music.'

¹ *Melos*, Mainz, October, 1931.

They think I write like Verdi. Such nonsense! They don't listen right. These people always want to nail me down. But I won't let them! On the next occasion I do something quite different; and that bewilders them!' It was certainly misleading of him to suggest that his apparent style changes were at least partly due to a longing to annoy the Philistines, when the truth of the matter was that all the time he was developing an acute historical awareness which was beginning to affect the esthetics of his musical composition.

About the same time as he abandoned his 'Russian style' and settled down in France, T. S. Eliot was entering on his public career as critic and poet in England; and in *The Sacred Wood* (1920) he reprinted an important essay on 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. In it he maintained that a true understanding of tradition can be obtained only by great labour. 'It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.'

For 'writer' and 'poet' read 'composer', for 'literature' read 'music'; and the passage fits perfectly the case of any composer who, with full artistic integrity, attempts to relate his work to the ever-flowing stream of tradition.

The analogy between Eliot and Stravinsky can be pursued further by those who are interested. For instance, the correspondence between Eliot's method of textual reminiscence and direct quotation ('These fragments I have shored against my ruins') as revealed in *The Waste Land* and the *Four Quartets* and Stravinsky's use of apparently derivative material in a work like *Oedipus Rex* is really very close; and the technique of both artists depends for its success, not so much on the public's ability to recognise the allusions and to solve a kind of private artistic quiz, as on the artists' ability to evoke emotion by successfully extracting the objective content of their material.

THE HISTORICAL SENSE

But the important thing is to establish once and for all the right of a composer to develop an historical sense of musical tradition and to allow the knowledge so acquired to be utilised 'for the intensifying and the development of the creative imagination';¹ and this right can surely not be denied to Stravinsky or any other serious composer.

¹ *The Historical Approach to Music*, by E. J. Dent. Harvard University Press. 1936.

CHAPTER V

THE NATURALISED FRENCHMAN
(FRANCE, 1928-1934)

15

'The Fairy's Kiss' and the 'Capriccio'

IT WAS now a considerable time since Stravinsky had last been in Russia; and his prolonged residence in France was leading him increasingly to adopt the outlook and mentality of a Frenchman. From his early days he had been familiar with the French language; and there is a description by Cocteau of an interview he had with the Russian poet Mayakovsky about 1923, which shows how far Stravinsky was already accepted as a compatriot by other Frenchmen. On this occasion Stravinsky acted as interpreter; but though he apparently performed prodigies of translation, the interview was not a success. The two poets found they belonged to very different worlds, and their thoughts were couched in such incompatible idioms that communication was almost impossible. After Mayakovsky's departure, Cocteau and Stravinsky heaved a sigh of relief. It was as though a foreigner had gone, leaving two compatriots together who were in complete understanding with each other. In the circumstances, it was not surprising that Stravinsky should think, not of returning to Russia—his ties with his native land were now almost completely severed, and he was not in sympathy with the Communist régime—but of becoming naturalised; and in 1934 he finally adopted French nationality.

About the beginning of 1928, the dancer, Ida Rubinstein, who was about to form a ballet company of her own, approached his publisher, Paichadze of the Edition Russe de Musique, to enquire whether she might include Stravinsky's new ballet, *Apollo Musagetes*, in her repertory. On being told that the European rights belonged to Diaghilev, she offered to commission a new ballet, and Benois submitted two plans, one of them for a ballet to be inspired by the music of Chaikovsky. This suggestion appealed to Stravinsky's historical sense—particularly since the date fixed for the first performance would coincide with the thirty-fifth anniversary of Chaikovsky's death—and he set to work to find an appropriate

subject. As he had decided not only to dedicate his score to Chaikovsky, but literally to base it on a selection of Chaikovsky's music, he turned to the literature of the nineteenth century and, after a brief search, found that one of Hans Andersen's longer tales, *The Ice Maiden*, would exactly suit his purpose.

This tells the story of a Swiss boy, Rudy, son of a postilion, who when a baby is taken by his mother across the Gemmi towards Grindelwald. There has been a recent fall of snow; and she falls into a concealed crevasse and dies. The child is rescued by two chamois hunters, but not before he has been kissed by the Ice Maiden, the Glacier Queen. 'To crush and to hold, mine is the power,' she soliloquises. 'They have stolen a beautiful boy from me, a boy whom I have kissed, but not kissed to death. . . . He is mine, and I will have him !' After this escape, Rudy grows up and becomes a celebrated marksman, hunter and climber. He falls in love with Babette, a miller's daughter; but the evening before their wedding, they row out to a little island near Chillon, their skiff breaks loose from its moorings and, in swimming out to retrieve it, Rudy is drowned in the waters of Lake Geneva. The Ice Maiden has reclaimed him. 'I kissed thee when thou wert little, kissed thee on thy mouth. Now I kiss thy feet, and thou art mine altogether.'

Stravinsky condensed Andersen's somewhat prolix story into the following simple scenario: *Tableau I*. Pursued by spirits in a storm, a mother is separated from her child, who is found and kissed by a fairy. A group of peasants passing by discover the abandoned boy and take him away. *Tableau II*. Eighteen years later, the boy and his fiancée are taking part in country dances outside a village. After his fiancée has gone home, the boy is approached by the fairy disguised as a gipsy. After reading his hand and promising him great happiness in the near future, she brings him to a mill (*Tableau III*) where he finds his fiancée surrounded by her friends. The lovers dance together; but when his fiancée has retired to put on her bridal dress, the fairy reappears disguised as the bride and carries him off to her glacial realms (*Tableau IV*) where she reclaims him with a kiss.

Stravinsky felt that, in this form, the story became a particularly appropriate allegory, 'the Muse having similarly branded Chaikovsky with her fatal kiss, whose mysterious imprint made itself felt in all this great artist's work'. As for the setting, all indications of local topography were carefully removed so that the scene-designer and producer should have a free hand to exercise their own imagination; but Stravinsky's own wish was that the ballet should be presented in a classical style, and the fête in *Tableau II* given a Swiss setting.

The bulk of *The Fairy's Kiss* was composed during the summer at Echarvines on Lake Annecy, and the instrumentation completed at Nice in the autumn. Although Stravinsky had borrowed the whole of his melodic material from Chaikovsky—with the sole exception (according to Schaeffner) of the theme where the Fairy's attendant spirits pursue the mother¹—the work seems to have been written against time and with a sense of strain. Doubtless it was not an easy task to weld this material into a homogeneous score; but Stravinsky committed an error when he tried to construct a ballet twice as long as *Apollo Musagetes*, and needing a continuous musical flow, out of fragments of short drawing-room pieces like the *Humoresque* (op. 10 no. 2), the *Natha Valse* (op. 51 no. 4), the *Nocturne* (op. 19 no. 4), the *Scherzo humoristique* (op. 19 no. 2) and the song *Ah! qui brûla d'amour* (op. 6 no. 6). This material proved incapable of meeting the totally different stresses to which it was subjected in its new environment; and only too often the result was that modest and unpretentious pieces were inflated beyond their proper dimensions and tended to become tenuous, weak and vapid. The validity of this criticism can be tested by divorcing the score from the stage action, when it will be found that the concert suite (entitled *Divertimento*) fails to hold the listeners' concentrated attention and is very small beer indeed when compared with the concert suites of any of the other ballets.

Granted the fact that Stravinsky made a fundamental mistake when planning *The Fairy's Kiss*, there is nevertheless much still to praise. A score based on Chaikovsky's music could hardly fail to provide moments of enchanting lyricism; and one of the most satisfactory passages is the *pas de deux* in Tableau III with its four separate numbers—Entry, Adagio, Variation and Coda. The country dances in Tableau II seem rather tame and lack vigour and brio: but this may be partly due to Stravinsky's rigid metrical control. The last Tableau, which reverts to the opening theme of Tableau I, forms a coda of intensely refrigerated feeling, which is glacial in its chill.

During the autumn, Stravinsky was too busy with the orchestration of the score to be able to supervise the choreography of Nijinska; and when he came to Paris to supervise the final rehearsals, he found that, though some of the scenes were partly successful, there was a good deal of which he could not really approve. In the circumstances, it was not surprising that the first performance in the Paris Opera House was not a great success.

¹ Section 14.

Diaghilev, who was furious at what he considered Stravinsky's defection from the Russian Ballet, was present and wrote to Lifar the same evening (November 27, 1928): 'I'm just back from the theatre, with a fearful headache, as a result of all the horrible things I've been seeing. Stravinsky's was the only new ballet. . . . It's difficult to say what it was meant to represent—tiresome, lachrymose, ill-chosen Chaikovsky, supposedly orchestrated by Igor in masterly fashion. I say "supposedly", because it sounded drab, and the whole arrangement lacked vitality. The *pas de deux*, however, was quite well done. . . . That, and the coda in the style of *Apollo*, were really the only bright spots (though the latter, too, was somewhat melancholy). But what went on on the stage, it is impossible to describe. Suffice it to say that the first scene represents the Swiss mountains, the second a Swiss village on holiday, accompanied by *Swiss* national dances, the third, a Swiss mill, and the fourth back again to mountains and glaciers. . . . Bronia¹ showed not the least gleam of invention, not one single movement that was decently thought out. As for Benois's décor, it was like the sets at the Monte Carlo Opera House. . . . The theatre was full, but as for success—it was like a drawing-room in which someone has suddenly made a bad smell. No one pretended to notice, and Stravinsky was twice called to the curtain. The whole thing was still-born. . . .' Diaghilev's disappointment was intense; he was prepared to accuse Stravinsky of hypocrisy in connection with his expression of admiration for another of Ida Rubinstein's performances; and his final bitter comment was that 'Stravinsky had given himself up entirely to the love of God and of cash'.

After two performances in Paris, one at Brussels, one at Monte Carlo and one at Milan, *The Fairy's Kiss* was removed from the repertory of Ida Rubinstein's Company. A few years later, Nijinska produced it again at the Colon Theatre, Buenos Aires; and in 1935 it was given in London by the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company with new choreography by Frederick Ashton, scenery and costumes by Sophie Fedorovitch, and Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann in the parts originally danced by Shollar and Vilzak. In 1937, Balanchin produced it for Kirstein's American Ballet, New York, and it was revived for the 1941-2 New York season of the Monte Carlo Ballet Company.

It was unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable, that this breach should have occurred between Stravinsky and Diaghilev. It was not the first time they had quarrelled; but the two men who had worked

¹ Nijinska.

so closely together in the early days of the Russian Ballet were now pursuing very different paths. Stravinsky had done his best to free himself from the shackles of the Russian Ballet; and, meanwhile, Diaghilev had reached a stage in his life when his interest in the future of his Company seemed to be yielding to a mania for collecting rare editions of Russian books, and manuscripts and holograph letters of writers like Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy and Turgenev. They were brought into touch once more in the spring of 1929, when *Reynard* was revived at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt (May 22) with new choreography by Lifar—an experiment in adapting acrobatics to the dance. But after that season in Paris, Stravinsky glimpsed Diaghilev once only, on the platform of the Gare du Nord when they were both catching the same train for London. Six weeks later, news of Diaghilev's death at Venice on August 19 reached him at Echarvines, where he was spending the summer as in the previous year.

When referring to Diaghilev six years later in his *Chronicle*, he did not gloss over the conflicts and disagreements that had marred the later years of their friendship, but made it quite clear that he fully understood and appreciated the debt he owed him. 'At the beginning of my career,' he wrote, 'he was the first to single me out for encouragement, and he gave me real and valuable assistance. Not only did he like my music and believe in my development, but he did his utmost to make the public appreciate me. He was genuinely attracted by what I was then writing, and it gave him real pleasure to produce my work, and, indeed, to force it on the more rebellious of my listeners, as, for example, in the case of *The Rite of Spring*. These feelings of his, and the zeal which characterised them, naturally evoked in me a reciprocal sense of gratitude, deep attachment, and admiration for his sensitive comprehension, his ardent enthusiasm, and the indomitable fire with which he put things into practice.'

Meanwhile, Stravinsky had nearly finished a new composition. Wishing to present another piano concerto to the public, he had started the previous Christmas to write a movement for piano and orchestra which he labelled *Allegro capriccioso* and which ultimately became the third and final movement of a work entitled *Capriccio*. Stravinsky has explained that he used this title in its original sense of *fantasia*; but, despite a wealth of free elaboration both in the piano part and the orchestral accompaniment, it will be found that the formal structure is as carefully worked out as in the Piano Concerto or Sonata. The composition of the *Capriccio* was finished by the end of September; the autumn was devoted to its orchestration;

and the first performance took place on December 6, 1929, in the Salle Pleyel, Paris, at a concert of the Paris Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ansermet, with Stravinsky himself as soloist.

Whereas the proportions of the Piano Concerto were disturbed by the excessive weight and importance of the first movement, in the *Capriccio* a more satisfactory balance was achieved between the three movements. The middle (slow) movement is rhapsodic and highly decorated; and the two flanking movements—the first, deliberate and wayward in character; the last, completely capricious—exploit a style in which piano and orchestra are given interchangeable material and frequently play into each other's hands.¹ This reciprocity calls for delicate adjustment so that the solo instrument is never overpowered by the orchestra, which consists of treble woodwind, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and strings. It should be noted that the second violins are suppressed, and there is a solo *concertino* quartet (violin, viola, 'cello, double-bass); but it must be admitted that on the whole Stravinsky makes only restricted use of the contrast between *solì* and *ripienti* strings.

The first movement has a brief introduction formed of (a) a loud and fast passage for piano and orchestra and (b) a slow and soft passage for the solo quartet. Both passages are repeated and lead directly to the main movement which the piano, reinforced by the timpani, opens with a rather sullen, low-pitched statement founded on a G minor arpeggio. In a bar of eight semiquavers (2/4), the accents for the most part fall on the first, fourth and seventh semiquavers. This motif acts like a sheet anchor, for though piano and orchestra find no difficulty in developing fresh material, the piano frequently reverts to it when in doubt. The appearance of a new subject in G major (marked *leggiere scherzando* in the piano part),² which is treated in *fugato*, deserves special attention because its use of appoggiaturas rising to the notes of the common chord (e.g. A sharp rising to B, etc.) anticipates one of the main characteristics of the thematic material of the last movement. The central point of the movement is occupied by a brief episode in E flat major (10 bars long) marked *poco più mosso*,³ which directly recalls the *pas de deux* Adagio in Tableau III of *The Fairy's Kiss*. Its purpose is clearly to serve as a kind of dorsal fin: but the effect is weak and unsatisfactory. After a re-exposition of much of the previous

¹ A clear example of an orchestral passage being literally taken over by the piano, and *vice versa*, occurs in the last movement at sections 56 and 60.

² Section 10.

³ Section 19.

material and a strange cadential passage¹ where the piano, attempting to modulate to C minor, is prevented by the orchestra and forced, instead, in the direction of E flat major, the movement ends with a coda based on an expanded restatement of the introduction—again in its *a-b-a-b* form.

The slow movement in F minor (*Andante rapsodico*), with its baroque richness of ornamentation in the piano part, exploits a style of writing which Stravinsky had first embarked on in the Beethovenish *Adagietto* of the Piano Sonata and develops it to a point where surface elegance is successfully allied to inner sobriety. Its ternary form needs no special analysis: but there is an attractive bitonal bridge-passages² just before the piano cadenza that deserves special attention.

The last movement, just like the last movement of the Piano Concerto, starts with an introduction where the piano, apparently unable to make up its mind, improvises a sequential semiquaver passage³ based on the characteristic accentuation (first, fourth and seventh semiquavers in a 2/4 bar) of the anchor motif in the first movement. But, fortunately, this leads quickly to a decisive fortissimo chord of the dominant of G; and, after a brief pause, the main subject (marked *Allegro brillante*) is introduced by the piano, accompanied by a derivative subject in the orchestra. Both subjects are based on the chord of G major and its rising appoggiaturas and are developed with great fluency and ingenuity in a light *scherzando* style which at times irresistibly recalls the music of Weber and Mendelssohn. Despite an occasional pause for breath, the movement has all the verve of a *moto perpetuo*.

Throughout the *Capriccio*, the writing for solo instrument is more pianistic than in the Piano Concerto. A new technical feature makes its appearance: the use of repeated notes—occasionally, as in the *Andante rapsodico*, for emphasis; but more often, in order to prolong the auditory sensation of a held note.⁴ This becomes a favourite device in later works for piano—particularly the *Duo Concertante* and the Concerto for Two Solo Pianos.

Whatever the demerits of *The Fairy's Kiss* may be, the *Capriccio* makes it clear that Stravinsky had learnt at least one thing from his handling of Chaikovsky's music—namely, the importance of grace.

¹ Sections 25 and 26.

² Section 49.

³ Sections 54 and 55.

⁴ Cf. sections 27 and 84.

The Symphony of Psalms

In 1930 Stravinsky completed the instrumentation of the Three Pieces for String Quartet and the Study for Pianola, which were performed that autumn in Berlin under the title Four Studies for Orchestra. Fresh contact with *Eccentric*, the second of the Four Studies, may possibly have given him the idea that there were unexplored potentialities in a little phrase that occurs in the 13th bar—just as two years earlier, when writing the gipsy music at the end of Tableau II of *The Fairy's Kiss*, he had literally quoted a theme of two interlinked descending thirds (E and C, followed by D sharp and B) which had originally appeared in his song, *Blue Forget-me-not* (1911). In any case, when as the result of a commission from Kussevitsky to compose a work to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, he decided to set a brief selection of the Psalms as a choral symphony, he used the device of two interlinked ascending thirds, not so much as a germ theme as in *The Wedding*, but as a means of unifying the thematic material in each of the Symphony's three movements.

In the first movements, it is present mainly as an accompanying figure of interlinked minor thirds.¹ In the second movement, he takes two interlinked minor thirds and, remembering the little phrase in *Eccentric*, inverts the second third to form the subject of the instrumental fugue—C rising to E flat, rising to B and falling to D. In the last movement, it appears again in the accompaniment, generally as a minor third interlinked with a major third,² though occasionally as two interlinked major thirds,³ and also in the choir, where the constituent notes of a major third interlinked with a minor third (B flat rising to D, and C rising to E flat) are rearranged to form the subject of the opening *Laudate*, the phrase D—E flat—B flat being repeated until it finally resolves on the C.⁴ The use of this device helps to confirm the strong feeling of internal unity that pervades the whole work.

For the text of this Symphony, Stravinsky selected from the

¹ Cf. sections 4, 7 and four bars before 13 in the first movement.

² Cf. trumpet and harp at section 4 of the last movement, the 2nd piano at section 14, etc.

³ Cf. trombones, tuba and pianos four bars before section 5.

⁴ Section 1.

Vulgate verses 13 and 14 of Psalm 38, verses 2, 3 and 4 of Psalm 39 and the whole of Psalm 150.¹ This fell naturally into three movements: Prayer (Prelude), Thanksgiving (Double Fugue) and Hymn of Praise (*Allegro symphonique*). To balance the all-male choir of trebles, altos, tenors and basses, he chose an orchestra with reinforced wind (but no clarinets),² a harp, two pianos, timpani, bass drum, 'cellos and double-basses (but no violins or violas).

The orchestral introduction to the first movement, with its slightly stiff arabesques played by the oboes and bassoons, and later the two pianos, is punctuated several times by a short sharp chord of E minor. The altos enter with a prayer that is almost a lamentation—*Exaudi orationem meum, Domine*—in which the vocal part is confined to the interval of a minor second (E rising to F, and F falling back to E). This lamentation alternates with phrases for the full chorus, rising to a climax at *Ne sileas*; and the episode is twice punctuated by the E minor chord. A more extended four-part passage for choir, in which a characteristic phrase for the trebles is inverted for the basses, prefaces a reinforced version of the previous climax at the words *Remitte mihi*. Another four-part passage for choir, in which the lamentation theme passes from the tenors to the trebles, leads to a closing succession of chords, with the key swinging upwards through F to G major.

The second movement follows without break, opening with a slow four-part fugue in C minor for woodwind (two flutes and two oboes). After twenty-two bars, there is a short contrapuntal episode for four flutes, based mainly on the countersubject, which leads directly to the choir's entry with the second four-part fugue (in E flat major)—*Expectans expectavi Dominum*. This is developed by the choir over the first fugal subject in the orchestra. To begin with, the entries are broadly spaced; but at the phrase, *Et statuit super petram pedes meos*, there is a *stretto*, the entries being made at the distance of half a bar and the orchestra becoming silent. It is now the choir's turn to be silent, while the orchestra has its *stretto*, consisting of, first, four entries of the fugal subject accompanied by its countersubject, and then three entries of the countersubject accompanied by the subject. After a brief pause, the final episode, *Et immisit in os meum canticum novum*, begins vigorously with full choir and orchestra. The trebles, reinforced by the tenors, are given a theme which is

¹ For the Authorised Version, the corresponding references are to verses 12 and 13 of Psalm 39, verses 1, 2 and 3 of Psalm 40, and the whole of Psalm 150.

² The score specifies 5 flutes, 4 oboes, 1 cor anglais, 3 bassoons, 1 double bassoon, 4 horns, 5 trumpets, 3 trombones and a tuba.

partly a retrograde and partly a direct statement of the choir's fugal subject; and this is accompanied by a *stretto* of the orchestral fugue. After thirteen strenuous bars, the volume of tone drops suddenly, the choir sings *Et sperabunt in Domino* softly in unison on E flat, and an attenuated echo of the subject of the first fugue is heard in the bass.

The third movement follows without break, two chords in the orchestra leading to a single-phrase, four-part *Alleluia* for choir, which swells out and then dies away. The solemn subject of the opening *Laudate* has already been mentioned above. It is at first introduced in unison above a pedal bass (consisting of C and its dominant G); and as it develops in three-part harmony, it proves to be in the Aeolian mode. Meanwhile, the pedal bass develops a third note and discloses a (discordant) major third, while the horns echo the lamentation theme from the first movement on G and A flat. This slow introduction ends with a unison C from the choir and a chord of C major on the 'cellos and double-basses, without the fifth (G) but with the minor seventh (B flat).

This chord is held, while the time suddenly changes to an *Allegro symphonique*, horns and bassoons bark out the chord of C major six times repeated in the rhythm of a rapidly articulated *Laudate Dominum*—the choir is silent—and sharp staccato phrases appear in the orchestra, some of which are based on the above-mentioned device of the two interlinked thirds. The stuttered chord starts to modulate through D major to E major,¹ in which key a wild outburst of triplets from woodwind and piano—somewhat reminiscent of Jocasta's air in *Oedipus Rex*—leads to a loud climax and then subsides as suddenly as it began. The trebles enter slowly and softly with the lamentation theme from the first movement—like the device of the interlinked thirds, this has now changed from minor to major—and the altos join in with a freer variant of the theme. There is a sudden break in the texture of the music; and above a strongly marked pedal bass, altos and tenors whisper *Laudate Dominum* in the same rhythm as the stuttered chord in the orchestral introduction, but with altered accents.² This cue is taken up by the woodwind and brass and developed to a climax of great power and splendour, *Laudate Eum in sono tubae*. There is another break, a brief return to the slow tempo of the beginning of the movement, a repetition of the *Alleluia* for the choir; and then a vigorous bridge passage leads to a recapitulation and development of the material

¹ This is the same modulation as in the bitonal passage of the *Capriccio* (section 49).

² On the 2nd, 4th and 6th beats, instead of the 1st, 3rd and 5th.

that appeared in the orchestral introduction at the beginning of the *Allegro*. But this time, the choir joins in with the horns' repeated chord, singing a rapid staccato *Laudate Dominum*; and the modulatory passage is carried a stage further so that the climax, when it comes, is a tone higher than before. After this, there is a *rallentando*, the repeated chord dies away, and a quiet *fugato* episode ensues for choir and orchestra, in the slow tempo of the opening. The tension increases when the trebles start to sing an ascending scale passage which starts on middle C sharp and brings them to a high G flat, at which point the deliberate bass slips into a sequence of fourths and the key changes to E flat for the coda.

This is an episode of forty-two bars in triple time, built up over a pedal bass moving in fourths like a pendulum—from B flat down to F and back to B flat, up to E flat and back to B flat again, etc. Its main characteristic consists of the slowly swinging melody of the trebles, festooned in phrases six bars long. The accompanying choral parts are restricted in range, none of them moving by steps of more than a semitone or a tone, with the exception of an occasional drop of an octave by the basses and an upward leap of a sixth by the tenors.¹ The orchestral accompaniment is built up on more or less the same lines without actually doubling the voices; and towards the end of the coda there are in all no less than ten independent parts (including the choir and the bass *ostinato*), the closely woven texture in the upper register of the wind instruments producing a halo of overtones. The choir stops at the 36th bar; the orchestra continues for another six bars; and then the movement ends in C major after a brief reference to the opening *Alleluia* and unison *Laudate*.

The Symphony of Psalms was begun early in 1930, but its composition was interrupted by numerous concert tours that Stravinsky undertook in Europe, mainly for the purpose of performing his *Capriccio*. The last two movements were written partly at Nice and partly at Charavines on Lake Paladru, and the work was finished on August 15, the orchestration being completed a few months later. The first European performance took place on December 13, 1930, at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, with Ansermet as conductor. Six days later, Kussevisky conducted the first American performance at Boston.

The above analysis will have helped to show that though the Symphony of Psalms is not constructed according to the usual rules

¹ Reminiscent of the same leap in the subject of the second fugue in the second movement.

of symphonic form, despite the fact that the last movement is labelled *Allegro symphonique*, it nevertheless has a special order and unity of its own. As is characteristic of Stravinsky's writing at its best, it is exceedingly terse and compact and lasts no more than twenty minutes in performance. The timbre of the orchestra is somewhat harsh and barbaric. Nevertheless, the work is clearly inspired by intense personal sincerity and religious conviction; and in dedicating it to the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Stravinsky could add, without incongruity, that it had been 'composed to the glory of God'. It is the direct expression of a fiercely Orthodox faith—orthodox in the Russian or Greek, rather than the Catholic sense, and fierce with the burning intensity of a religious artist like the eleventh century Byzantine mosaicist who created the unforgettable, fanatical, dark-haired, piercing-eyed Christ in the dome of the little church at Daphni.

17

The Concerto and other Compositions for Violin

During his frequent visits to Mainz and Wiesbaden, Stravinsky made the acquaintance of Willy Strecker of Schott's music publishing house; and it was Strecker who at the beginning of 1931 introduced him to a young American violinist, Samuel Dushkin, a *protégé* of Blair Fairchild's, and suggested that he should write a special work for him. To begin with, Stravinsky was nervous that in Dushkin he would find the usual type of virtuoso player whom he abhorred; but after their meeting, he was completely reassured and agreed to compose a violin concerto on condition Dushkin collaborated over the solo part. After examining a number of violin concertos by other composers, he selected D as the most appropriate key and planned his Concerto in four movements, as follows: 1. Toccata, 2. Aria I, 3. Aria II, 4. Capriccio. The first three movements were written at Nice during the early part of 1931, and the last at Voreppe in the Isère, where he moved with his family in the course of the summer.

For the first movement, he followed the same scheme as in the Piano *Capriccio* and chose thematic material that should be interchangeable between the solo instrument and the orchestra. For instance, after a brief introduction of four chords (which is repeated in slightly varying forms at the beginning of each of the other movements), the Toccata opens with a resilient subject in thirds. This is enunciated by the trumpets and echoed by the oboes. When

presently the solo instrument introduces a subsidiary theme that bounds up the notes of the chord of C major, it is accompanied by the flutes playing the main toccata subject.¹ A few bars later, the roles are reversed: the solo instrument takes over the toccata subject, and the trumpet has the subsidiary theme.²

The main theme of the first Aria (which is in D minor) is somewhat akin to the brief passage for solo quartet that introduced the first movement of the *Capriccio*. It is treated with ease and fluency over a well developed bass. The second Aria (in F sharp minor) is more in the style of a lyrical cantilena for the solo violin with a string accompaniment that recalls some of the slow movements of J. S. Bach. The *Capriccio* (which like the Toccata is in D major) is somewhat similar to the last movement of the Piano *Capriccio*, both in name and in the brilliant virtuosity it exacts from the soloist. It is constructed on the lines of a rondo followed by a *Più Mosso* section and a *Presto* coda.

Despite the full orchestra employed,³ the instrumentation is very light; and Stravinsky is particularly careful not to swamp the solo violin. There are numerous passages where the soloist is accompanied by only a handful of instrumentalists, e.g. clarinet and bassoon,⁴ or two flutes and the double-basses;⁵ and Stravinsky shows consummate skill in constructing a score that combines the spacious properties of a concerto for violin and full orchestra with the more intimate qualities of a chamber music ensemble.

The first performance of the Concerto took place in Berlin on October 23, 1931, with Dushkin as soloist and Stravinsky as conductor. Dushkin retained the sole rights of performance for a period of about two years, during which he played it throughout Europe. For the 1940-1 New York season of de Basil's Ballet Company the score was used as basis for a classical ballet entitled *Balustrade*, with choreography by Balanchin.

When the Concerto was finished, Stravinsky decided to write another work for solo violin to be used as the central item in a programme of chamber music with Dushkin and himself as the main performers. It was characteristic of his dogmatic turn of mind that only after considerable thought was he able to convince himself that the normal and widely accepted combination of violin and piano provided the best solution. 'For many years,' he declared in a

¹ Section 7.

² Section 11.

³ Twelve woodwind; 11 brass; timpani; and strings divided 8:8:6:4:4.

⁴ As at sections 94 and 114.

⁵ As in the last bars of the second Aria.

programme note, 'I had taken no pleasure in the blend of strings struck in the piano with strings set in vibration by the bow. In order to reconcile myself to this instrumental combination, I was compelled to use the minimum number of instruments, that is to say, only two, for in that way I saw the possibility of solving the instrumental and acoustic problem of associating the strings of the piano with those of the violin. Thus originated the idea of the *Duo Concertante* for violin and piano. The mating of these instruments seems to bring about greater clarity than the combination of a piano with several stringed instruments, which tends to confusion with the orchestra.'

His object in writing the *Duo Concertante* was to create a 'lyrical composition, a work of musical versification'; and its spirit and, to a limited extent, its form were determined by his interest in the pastoral poetry of antiquity. The five movements are entitled Cantilena, Eclogue I, Eclogue II, Jig and Dithyramb; and there is an attempt (as in Bartok's fourth String Quartet) to group them symmetrically about the middle (slow) movement. Stravinsky has stated that he chose a theme which develops through all the five movements; but it cannot be admitted that they form a successfully integrated whole. Indeed, the quality of much of the music is below par, and the only movement to give an impression of real originality and beauty is the Dithyramb.

The first movement is hardly a Cantilena in the usually accepted sense. It opens with an episode where the violin presents a number of arpeggio arabesques (somewhat in the style of the introduction to the first movement of the Symphony of Psalms) above a piano accompaniment characterised by the use of repeated notes. The main subject is expressed in double-stopping on the violin and is developed, while the piano takes over the arabesque motif.

The first Eclogue begins with a lively bagpipe episode, with the violin playing the chanter above a pedal A (on the open string) and the piano providing a patterned *ostinato* like a drone and later echoing the chanter tune in canon. In a new episode, the violin resorts to a form of double-stopping that is reminiscent of the Rag-time and the Triumphal March of the Devil in *The Soldier's Tale*. The second Eclogue is a slow movement, whose main theme is similar in style to the passage for string quartet in the introduction to the first movement of the *Capriccio*, but fails to develop as successfully as in the first Aria of the Violin Concerto.

The Jig is perhaps the only one of Stravinsky's fast movements to merit the epithet 'boring'. It is somewhat like the Tarantella in *Pulcinella*, but the cascade of notes poured forth by violin and piano

seems to lack significance and becomes in the end an almost meaningless babble. The main 6/8 movement is twice interrupted by episodes like trios, the second of which recalls the *pas de deux* in *Apollo*.

In the Dithyramb, however, Stravinsky recovers his full stature as a composer. Its four-part writing for piano is as vigorous as the double fugue in the Symphony of Psalms; and the violin has a true cantilena of considerable majesty and exaltation.

The composition of the *Duo Concertante* was finished on July 15, 1932, and the first performance given by Dushkin and Stravinsky at the Berliner Rundfunk on October 28. Afterwards, the two performers toured Europe, giving a number of violin and piano recitals. As well as the *Duo Concertante*, they played a new selection of material from *Pulcinella* arranged for violin and piano called *Suite Italienne*, the bastard suite from *The Soldier's Tale* for violin, clarinet and piano, and a group of several transcriptions of Stravinsky's works. These included *Pastoral* (in its expanded version), the Chinese March and the Nightingale's Songs from the last two acts of *The Nightingale*, the Scherzo (Dance of the Fire Bird) and Lullaby from *The Fire Bird*, and the Russian Dance from *Petrushka*. *Pastoral*, the Nightingale's Songs and the Fire Bird's Lullaby were fairly successful in their new form, as was also a later transcription of Parasha's opening air from *Mavra* under the title, *Russian Maiden's Song*; but it cannot be said that the other transcriptions were really suited to the particular medium of violin and piano. In all these works (except the suite from *The Soldier's Tale*), Dushkin collaborated with Stravinsky in writing the violin part.

18

'Persephone'

At the beginning of 1933, Ida Rubinstein commissioned Stravinsky to set to music a poem by André Gide based on the Homeric Hymn to Demeter. Gide travelled to Wiesbaden to discuss the matter with Stravinsky and showed him the manuscript on February 8. It had been written before the first World War in the French Parnassian tradition and was rich in rhyme and romantic in phraseology. The two collaborators reached a complete understanding; and after a further meeting in Paris at the beginning of April, Stravinsky set to work on the composition of *Persephone*. It was finished on December 20, 1933, the orchestration completed on January 24,

1934, and the first performance took place at the Paris Opera House on April 30, with Ida Rubinstein in the title role and René Maison as Eumolpus. The dances were arranged by Kurt Jooss; André Barsacq designed the scenery and costumes; and Stravinsky conducted.

Persephone is a melodrama, with music, singing, spoken recitation, miming and dancing. It has two main characters: Persephone herself and Eumolpus, the high priest of the cult of Demeter and founder of the Eleusinian mysteries. (The parts of Demeter, Triptolemus and Mercury are mute.) The chorus represents Nymphs, Shades and Danaïdes. The part of Persephone is mimed, spoken and danced; Eumolpus (tenor) acts as narrator and commentator. The usual four-part mixed choir sings the words of the Nymphs, Shades and Danaïdes, with the addition of boy trebles and altos in the third part to represent a chorus of children.¹ Although the lay-out of recitation, airs and choruses is freer and much less formal than, for instance, in *Oedipus Rex*, it is possible to reduce the score to the following approximate scheme:

Part One: The Abduction of Persephone.

1. *Air.* During Eumolpus's invocation to Demeter, goddess of fertility and mother of Persephone, the curtain rises on a meadow by the seashore, with a rocky defile on one side that leads to the underworld. (It should be noted that Eumolpus, both here and in his succeeding narrations—nos. 5 and 16—lays stress on Homer as the source of the myth.)

2 (a). *Chorus.* Demeter, summoned away by Mercury, bids farewell to Persephone and confides her to the care of the Nymphs, who sing of the world's first morning.

(b). *Chorus:* '*Ivresse matinale.*'

(c). *Solo* (Eumolpus) and *Chorus.* The Nymphs sing of the flowers growing in the meadow and warn Persephone not to pick the narcissus—

*Celui qui respire son odeur
Voit le monde inconnu des Enfers.*

But she breaks through their circle, plucks it and is immediately overwhelmed by anxiety and grief.

3. *Air.* Eumolpus advises her not to heed the Nymphs' warning. He tells her about the Shades of the underworld, who await the

¹ In his *Journal*, Gide describes how Ida Rubinstein, Stravinsky and himself visited Saint-Louis des Invalides at the end of May 1933 to hear a boys' choir which they thought of using in the third part of *Persephone*. Ultimately, the Zanglust Choir from Amsterdam was engaged for the Paris production.

consolation of her coming and over whom he promises she shall reign—

Viens! tu régneras sur les ombres.

With her eyes fixed on the narcissus she holds in her hand, Persephone approaches the rocky defile that leads to the underworld.

(Curtain.)

Part Two: Persephone in the Underworld.

4. *Orchestral Introduction.*

5. *Air* (Eumolpus): narration. The curtain rises. The scene represents the Elysian fields, with a gate on one side leading to Pluto's palace. On the other side is the bank of Lethe, above which wave the boughs of an immense tree. Persephone is discovered asleep on a couch, still pressing to her breast the flower of the narcissus. Nearby, a number of Shades are asleep, while a group of Danaïdes, draped in ashen green, draw water from the river in their urns. The back of the stage is obscured by clouds.

6 (a). *Chorus*: lullaby—

*Sur ce lit elle repose,
Et je n'ose
La troubler.*

Persephone awakes; and the Danaïdes sing of the plight of the Shades. They are not unhappy, for they know neither love nor hate, grief nor desire.

(b). *Chorus*: '*Les ombres ne sont pas malheureuses.*' They ask her to tell them of the terrestrial spring; but as she begins to do so, Pluto calls her.

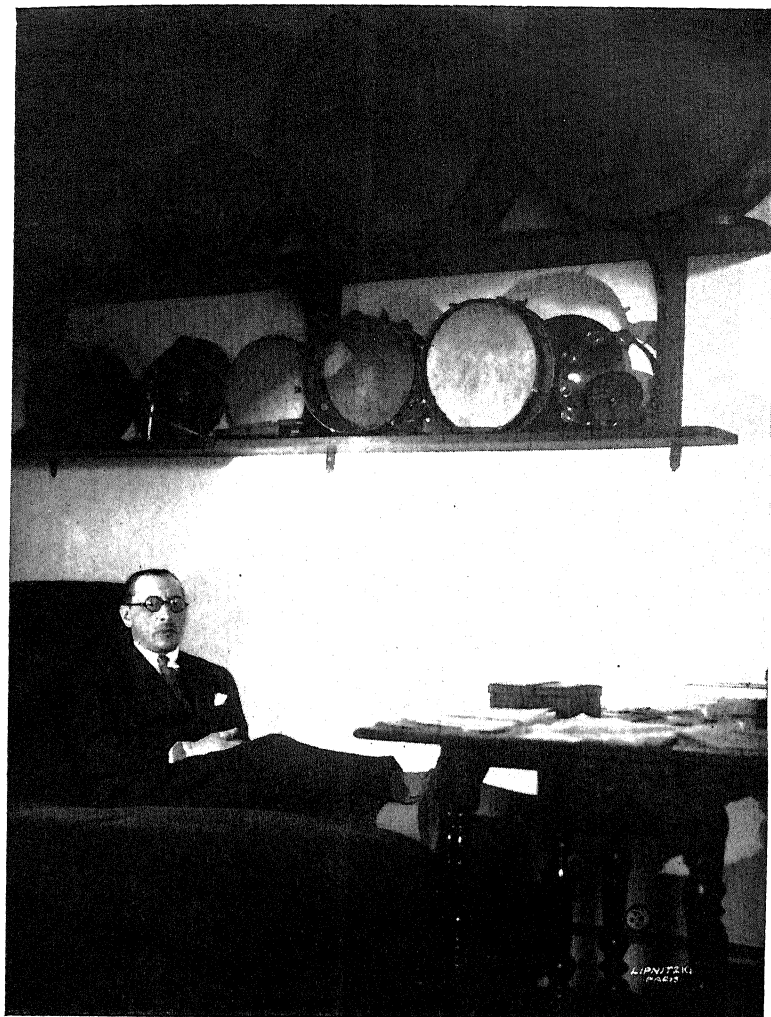
7. *Air*. Eumolpus explains that it is her destiny to be queen of the underworld and urges her to drink a cup of water from Lethe.

8. *Orchestral Interlude*. Shades draped in black enter from Pluto's palace, bringing jewels and fine garments, which she rejects.

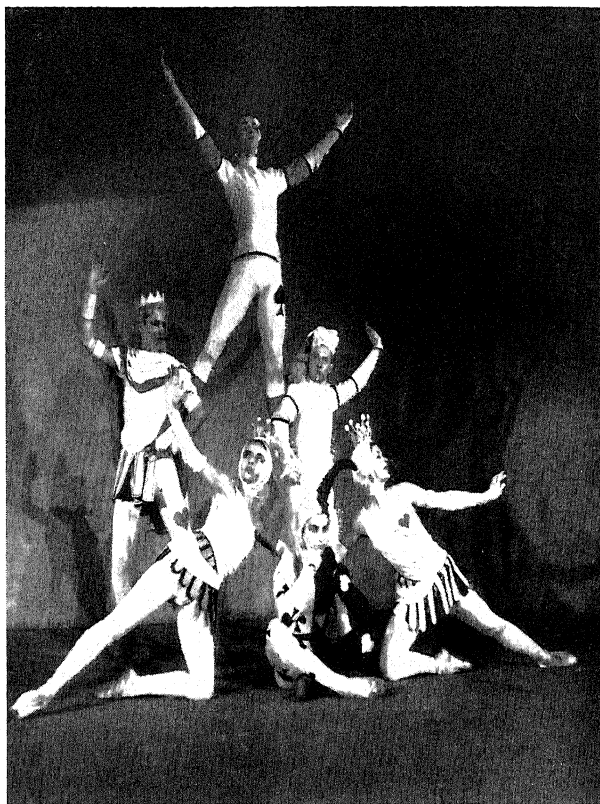
9. *Chorus*: invocation to Mercury. The clouds at the back of the stage part to reveal Mercury, followed by a procession of the Hours clad in colours ranging from sunrise to sunset. Each brings a present for Persephone; but she refuses them all.

10. *Air*. Eumolpus describes how Mercury tempts her with a ripe pomegranate. She bites it; and the taste brings back a longing for the world she has lost. Mercury and the Hours retire.

11. *Chorus and Recitation* (Persephone). The Shades advise her



Lipnitzki
STRAVINSKY: in his studio at the Salle Pleyel,
Paris (1929).



B. M. Bernand

A CARD GAME: a scene from the 1945 production
by the Ballet des Champs-Élysées.

that if she gazes at the narcissus she has brought with her, she will behold her mother and the world above. She does so and is appalled by a vision of eternal winter on earth and her mother's despair.

12. *Air*. Eumolpus describes the birth of Demophoon (later to be known as Triptolemus) and his upbringing by Demeter. When this child grows up, he will bring salvation to the world and through him Persephone will be brought back to the light of day.

13. *Chorus and Recitation* (Persephone). Promise of Persephone's rebirth and return to earth as queen of the spring.

14. *Recitation* (Persephone):

. . . *O mon terrestre époux, radieux Triptolème,
Qui m'appelles, j'accours! Je t'appartiens! Je t'aime!*

(Curtain.)

Part Three: The Rebirth of Persephone.

15. *Orchestral Introduction*.

16. *Air* (Eumolpus): narration and description of the temple built by the Greeks for Demeter on a hill overlooking the present and the future. During this air, the curtain rises on a scene showing (backstage) a hill surmounted by a Doric temple. On one side is a mound, with evergreen oaks growing on it and a stone tomb built in the Etruscan style. In front of its stone portals stands the Genius of Death with an extinguished torch in his hands.

17 (a). *Chorus*. The Nymphs and a chorus of children bring offerings to Demeter and Triptolemus. The latter discards his mourning cloak and strews flowers before Persephone's tomb. The stone panels swing back on their hinges, and Persephone emerges.

(b). *Chorus*. As she comes forward with faltering steps, roses spring up wherever her feet touch the soil. She joins Demeter, Triptolemus and the chorus of Nymphs at the top of the hill by the temple.

18. *Recitation* (Persephone). Despite her joy at being restored to her mother and united with Triptolemus, she realises that henceforth nothing can stop the cycle of the seasons and that it will be her destiny in due course to return to the underworld and to descend again into that pit of human misery. She takes the lighted torch from Mercury, who guides her towards the door of the tomb, while Demeter, Triptolemus and the chorus remain on the hillside.

19. *Solo* (Eumolpus) and *Chorus*

*Ainsi vers l'ombre souterraine
 Tu t'achemines à pas lents,
 Porteuse de la torche et reine
 Des vastes pays somnolents.*

*Ton lot est d'apporter aux ombres
 Un peu de la clarté du jour,
 Un répit à leurs maux sans nombre,
 A leur détresse un peu d'amour.*

*Il faut pour qu'un printemps renaisse
 Que le grain consente à mourir
 Sous terre, afin qu'il reparaîsse
 En moisson d'or pour l'avenir.*

(Curtain.)

To begin with, Stravinsky was a little nervous about setting *Persephone*. It was the first time since the two Verlaine songs (1910) that he had worked to a French text. Words, whether Russian or Latin, he had always looked on as something of an encumbrance from the musical point of view, since with their different syntactic functions they carried with them varying intensities of meaning, which often were at variance with the build-up of a musical phrase. In Gide's poem, however, he found a syllabic structure that was almost ideal for his purpose. Sometimes his preoccupation with syllables (as in the case of no. 2 [b], the chorus, *Ivresse matinale*) led him to break up words: but at other times he seems to have gained something new and valuable by allowing his music to follow closely the outline of Gide's lyrical system.

Although two-part writing for the chorus prevails, there is a strong tendency towards homophony. The subsidiary choral part (or parts) is usually designed, not as a counterpoint, but to underlie and underline the melody.

Persephone is more loosely constructed than *The Wedding* or the *Symphony of Psalms*. There is a certain unity of thematic material that binds together Eumolpus's narratives (nos. 1, 5, 16 and 19); but this merely forms a light framework for the melodrama proper, which is distinguished by an extraordinary flow of fertile musical ideas. The only exception is to be found in certain numbers in Part

Two, which are monotonous and static, as is presumably appropriate to Shades of the underworld who have no other destiny '*que de recommencer sans fin le geste inachevé de la vie*'.

There is a great variety of speeds (though it should be noted that most of the *tempi* are on the slow side); and no longer does Stravinsky make any attempt to achieve the sort of metronomical gearing that turned *The Wedding* and the Symphonies of Wind Instruments into almost automatic pieces of machinery. This leads to a corresponding gain in rhythmic subtlety. A new feature appears in some of the numbers, a kind of metrical ambiguity that may be partly due to the lyrical impulse caused by setting Gide's verses. It is to be found in the choruses (nos. 6, 17 and 19) and in Eumolpus's airs (nos. 12 and 16). For instance, a phrase consisting of twelve beats that would normally be notated as three bars of 4/4 is set out in alternate bars of 2/4 and 3/4.¹ This gives the music a kind of swaying ambiguity and allows the composer an opportunity of using counterpoint metres in the accompaniment² and of avoiding too definite a scheme of accentuation. Even the three regular quatrains of the last chorus (no. 19) of Part Three are varied by the device of making the chorus join the soloist at different places in each verse (at the third line of the first verse, the second line of the second verse, and the first line of the third).

Another comparatively new feature is the occasional use of an aerated style of writing, in which notes and phrases are punctuated by frequent short rests and pauses for breath. Stravinsky had experimented with this style in the duet between the Shepherd and the Messenger in *Oedipus Rex*³; but now he made more extended use of it, particularly in some of the choruses (nos. 2 [b] and 17 [b]) and Eumolpus's air (no. 16). In the chorus, *Ivresse matinale* (no. 2 [b]), the pauses and rests sometimes cut through the words (as mentioned above) and give an effect of consummate lightness and transparency. In Eumolpus's air (no. 16) and the latter part of the chorus, *Ombre encore t'environne* (no. 17 [b]), the pauses coincide with the words and phrases and help to emphasise the meaning. There is also an interesting example of a musical line being broken up into small fragments and relayed from sopranos to contraltos, contraltos to tenors, tenors to basses and so on: *Triptolème | arrache | le manteau | de deuil | qui le couvre | encore | et parsème | de fleurs | l'alentour | du cercueil*⁴

¹ Sections 74 and 87.

² Cf. the 3/4 + 4/4 + 5/4 *ostinato* at section 74.

³ *Oedipus Rex*, section 166.

⁴ *Persephone*, section 215 *et seq.*

There is a great clarity and radiance about the music of Parts One and Three. The two opening choruses (nos. 2 [a] and [b]) evoke the sparkling freshness of an Aegean morning, just as Eumolpus's air, *Cependant sur la colline* (no. 16), with its alternation of *forte* and *piano* chords, sketches in terms of sound the pattern made by a row of sunlit marble columns. And the whole of the chorus hailing the return of Persephone, *Ombre encore t'environne*, is in the purest classical tradition and rivals the serenity of Gluck's Elysian music in *Orpheus*.

Naturally, there are passages that recall other works by Stravinsky. For instance, it would not be fanciful to trace a relationship between the accompaniment to Persephone's recitations in Parts One and Three¹ with its trailing bass of dropping fourths and the passages in *The Nightingale* where the Nightingale sings of the garden of Death.² Even closer is the resemblance between the chorus just before Persephone's rebirth (no. 17 [a]) and the passage in the duet between Oedipus and Jocasta where Oedipus is first struck by the chill pang of fear.³ There are also passages, like the chorus *Ivresse matinale*, that clearly owe part of their lightness and grace to Stravinsky's earlier preoccupation with Chaikovsky's music in *The Fairy's Kiss* and his evolution of a capricious style in the *Capriccio* and the Violin Concerto.

In a particularly dogmatic manifesto printed in *Excelsior* before the première of *Persephone*, Stravinsky said: 'I must warn the public that I loathe orchestral effects as a means of embellishment. They must not expect me to dazzle them with seductive sounds. I have long since renounced the futilities of *brío*.' Although *Persephone* is scored for normal symphony orchestra, the full orchestra is used only at the appearance of Mercury (no. 9) and in the introduction to Part Three (no. 15). Domenico de' Paoli, in his study of Stravinsky, gives various examples of the extreme reserve and discretion with which the various numbers are instrumented. For instance, the chorus, *Le premier matin du monde* (no. 2 [a]), is scored for strings and harps, reinforced later by horns and piano; and the strange little march⁴ in the introduction to Part Two (no. 4) is written for oboe accompanied by tuba and clarinets.

The manifesto goes on to say: 'This score, as it is written and as it must remain in the musical archives of our time, forms an indissoluble whole with the tendencies repeatedly asserted in my previous works. It is a sequel to *Oedipus Rex*, the Symphony of Psalms, to a

¹ Sections 41 and 254.

² *The Nightingale*, section 117 and elsewhere.

³ *Oedipus Rex*, sections 117 and 129.

⁴ *Persephone*, section 63 *et seq.*

whole progression of works whose musical autonomy is in no way affected by the absence of a stage spectacle. *Persephone* is the present manifestation of that tendency. . . .

‘All this is in no way due to a caprice on my part. I am on a perfectly sure road. There is nothing to discuss or to criticise. One does not criticise anyone that is functioning. A nose is not manufactured—it just exists. So it is with my art.’

The significant part of Stravinsky’s manifesto is to be found, not so much in the somewhat intransigent peroration—for who would wish to deny that for an artist the exercise of his art is a perfectly natural function?—as in the passage where he speaks of ‘the musical archives of our time’. The phrase has a chilly ring about it. The preservation of a work of art is so widely removed from the joy and excitement of its living presentation that it must be a matter for deep regret that, because of accidental circumstances connected with its commission, *Persephone* is likely to remain on the library shelf and to be taken down for performance at only rare intervals.

As a pendant to *Persephone*, mention should here be made of the short *Credo* and *Ave Maria*, dated 1932 and April 4, 1934, respectively, that Stravinsky wrote for unaccompanied S.A.T.B. choir. Like the *Paternoster* of 1926, they are intended for use in the Russian Orthodox Church service. The *Credo* is a freely developed plain-song, while the *Ave Maria* is a more formal chant, in whose archaic modal phrases may be found a strange half-echo of the Protestant chorale in *The Soldier’s Tale*.

CHAPTER VI
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

19

Two more Concertos and 'A Card Game'

ALTHOUGH STRAVINSKY became a naturalised Frenchman in 1934 and shortly afterwards went so far as to apply for membership of the Académie Française, he spent an increasing amount of his time during the next few years in America. After the Paris production of *Persephone*, he carried out his second tour of the United States. It was nearly ten years since he had first crossed the Atlantic, and his technique as a conductor had definitely matured. Some of his audiences may have been disappointed at the inexorably objective and anti-romantic way he conducted his early works; but the tour as a whole was an undoubted success, and such was the press of his engagements that he was unable to devote any of his spare time to composition. Instead, he planned a kind of autobiography, a Chronicle of his Life, which was finished and published in Paris the following year.

Few composers, with perhaps the exception of Berlioz, have written distinguished books: but Stravinsky, remembering the example of his master, Rimsky-Korsakov, set out to produce an authoritative and objective picture of himself and his work. There is no doubt that, within his self-imposed limits, he succeeded. As might be expected, he eschews the picturesque—for instance, there are practically no anecdotes, apart from an amusing but bitter description of a visit with Diaghilev to hear *Parsifal* at Bayreuth in the summer of 1912—and the book is limited to a reasoned and factual account of his career as composer, conductor and executant. His fear of distortion is so strong that he makes no attempt to recreate his feelings of former periods lest in so doing he should falsify them. The most interesting example of this reticence is to be found when he is speaking of *The Rite of Spring*. 'In reading what I have written about *The Rite*,' he says, 'the reader will perhaps be astonished to notice how little I have said about the music. The omission is deliberate. It is impossible, after the lapse of twenty years, to recall what were the feelings which animated me in

composing it. One can recollect facts or incidents with more or less exactitude, but one cannot reconstitute feelings without the risk of distorting them under the influence of the many changes which one has undergone.' While honouring Stravinsky's scruples, one cannot help feeling regret that when he brought his *Chronicle* up to date, he should have denied himself the indulgence of describing his feelings during the composition of *Persephone*. After giving brief facts about its conception and performance, he says, 'But it is all too recent for me to discuss it with the necessary detachment.' It must be admitted, however, that in some ways he made handsome amends for this omission a few years later when he wrote his *Musical Poetics*.

On his return to Paris after the American tour, he set to work on a new Piano Concerto. It was six years since he had produced the *Capriccio*; but now there was a new factor to take into consideration. His second son, Sviatoslav, a pianist of more than usual ability, had already performed the solo parts of the Piano Concerto and the *Capriccio* under his father's baton at Barcelona in November 1933. A Concerto for Two Solo Pianos (without orchestra) was accordingly planned; and this received its first performance by Stravinsky himself and his son at the Salle Gaveau, Paris, on November 21, 1935.

The Concerto is divided into four movements: 1. *Con moto*; 2. Nocturne; 3. Four Variations; 4. Prelude and Fugue.

Here Stravinsky carries a stage further the device of the inter-availability of material between the *concertante* instrument and the orchestra which was such a special feature of certain movements in the *Capriccio* and the Violin Concerto. In this, he is, of course, helped by the fact that there is now no orchestra to reckon with—but only two solo instruments of equal standing; and it will be found that he goes so far as to cut up a theme and divide it between the two pianists, particularly striking examples occurring in the third Variation and also in the Fugue. A happy compromise is also struck between the piano's natural tendency towards vertical chording and its disability to sustain for long the notes of a slowly moving horizontal line. He uses with consummate skill the device of repeated notes, sometimes to prolong the notes of a slow melody, sometimes to spread out evenly a harmonic accompaniment, and sometimes merely to achieve the effect of a kind of *pointilliste* screen or grid.

The first two movements are both ternary in form; and in each, the key of the middle section is as remote as possible from the basic key. The first movement modulates from E minor to B flat major and back again; the Nocturne, from G major to D flat major and back again. The theme of the Variations, which is the same as that

of the Fugue, is implicit rather than directly stated. In the first Variation, it appears in the key of D above an accompaniment that partakes of the characteristics of both B flat major and G minor; in the second Variation, in the key of B flat modulating to C sharp; in the third, in the key of G sharp above an accompaniment in C sharp minor; in the fourth, in the key of E above an accompaniment that starts by being in a key of three or four flats, but is gradually won over by enharmonic modulation to a key of four sharps. The Prelude and Fugue are in D; but after an inversion of the Fugue, the work ends with a *Largo* statement of the fugal subject in E.

It not unnaturally follows from the bitonal layout of some of the movements that Stravinsky makes more extended use of chromaticism in this work than he had done for many years. Chromatic passages play an important part, particularly in the first movement and the first, third and fourth Variations. Even the grid of the Fugue finds it necessary to vary the repeated note sextuplets by occasional chromatic runs. It is interesting to find that the third Variation recalls the fourth Study for Piano (op. 7) with its humming chromatic accompaniment, and in the fourth Variation, bitonal streams of major chords are deployed with a vigour that is rare in Stravinsky's compositions after *The Rite of Spring*.

Just as the opening subject of the first movement of the *Capriccio* was founded on a bass arpeggio of G minor, so here the second piano opens the first movement with a deliberate statement of the arpeggio of E minor, at first in equal, then in dotted notes, and later in diminution. In the middle section of this movement, the first piano unfolds a baroque theme that twines itself round the chord of B flat major. It represents an intermediate stage in the development of a musical idea that was first adumbrated in the *Andante rapsodico* of the *Capriccio* and was later to mature as the main subject of the first movement of the Symphony in C.

This Concerto is an imposing full-scale work. Its first movement is forceful and dynamic; the Nocturne, delicate and highly ornamental; the Variations, ingenious; and every contrapuntal resource is brought to play in the final movement. At the same time, it can be recommended as one of the most easily accessible works of Stravinsky's later period.

In June 1936 he was commissioned by Edward Warburg and Lincoln Kirstein, directors of the newly formed American Ballet, to write a new work for their Company. He decided to base it on a game of cards; and the action, which is divided into three deals, is summarised as follows: 'The characters are the chief cards in a game

of Poker, disputed between several players on the green cloth of a card-room. At each deal the situation is complicated by the endless guiles of the perfidious Joker, who believes himself invincible because of his ability to become any desired card. During the first deal, one of the players is beaten, but the other two remain with even "straights", although one of them holds the Joker. In the second deal, the hand that holds the Joker is victorious, thanks to four Aces who easily beat four Queens. In the third and last deal, it is a struggle between three "flushes". Although at first victorious over one adversary, the Joker, strutting at the head of a sequence of Spades, is beaten by a "Royal Flush" in Hearts. This puts an end to his malice and knavery.'

In the printed score, this note is followed by a quotation from La Fontaine's sinister fable of *The Wolves and the Sheep*, which has a strangely prophetic ring about it in view of the way the political situation was then developing in Europe.

*Nour pouvons conclure de là
Qu'il faut faire aux méchants guerre continuelle.
La paix est fort bonne de soi,
J'en conviens; mais de quoi sert-elle
Avec des ennemis sans foi?*

It would have been difficult to find better advice than this to tender to the statesmen of the democracies two years before Munich.

The score of *A Card Game (Jeu de Cartes)* was finished by November 1936, and the ballet performed for the first time at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, on April 27, 1937, with choreography by Balanchin and Stravinsky as conductor. *Apollo* and *The Fairy's Kiss* were given in the same bill. The first European production took place the following October at the Staatsoper, Dresden, with choreography by Valeria Kratina; and shortly after the second World War, the ballet was successfully revived by the Ballets des Champs-Élysées with choreography by Janine Charrat.

The work is written for double woodwind, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum and strings. Its three movements (or deals) play without interruption.

Each movement opens with a processional (*Alla breve*), which is supposed to introduce the shuffling of the pack. The first movement is in ternary form, a vigorous *stringendo* episode (in F minor) for full orchestra being framed by a *moderato assai* section with a prominent subject for flute (in D flat major). In the second movement, the processional leads to a march, which is followed by five

variations and a coda. Although in this case the composer uses both terms in their choreographic rather than their musical sense, there is no doubt that all six episodes are based on a common theme; and it should be noted that the key level falls from B flat (in the first variation), through A (in the second), A flat (in the third), G (in the fourth) to E flat (in the fifth) and back to G (for the coda). The march returns and acts as a bridge passage to an extended musical coda (as distinct from the choreography coda) marked *Con moto*. The third movement is divided into three parts: a waltz, a *presto* and a finale marked *leggiero grazioso*. The work ends with an extended reference to the processional.

It does not seem at all out of character that in the gambling saloon where this game of poker is played, there should be echoes of Rossini, Delibes, Johann Strauss, Chaikovsky and Ravel: their music fits in with the spirit of the game, and Stravinsky knows exactly how to blend it with his own distinctive witty and incisive commentary. It is beside the point to attack the *Presto* in the last movement because of its resemblance to the *Allegro con brio* theme in the Overture to *The Barber of Seville*. What has happened is that Rossini and Stravinsky, needing the same effect of sparkling effervescence, have taken similar themes and treated them in different ways. The same sort of thing occurs in the first variation in the second deal, where the key, staccato chordal accompaniment and chromatic melody all recall the *Allegretto scherzando* movement of Beethoven's 8th Symphony. Even Stravinsky's own earlier compositions are laid under contribution. The *stringendo* passage in the first deal springs almost directly from the first movement of the Concerto for Two Solo Pianos; and the *leggiero grazioso* finale to the third deal provides another example of a theme that is built up round the notes of a major common chord and its rising appoggiaturas—an idea that had obsessed him since the coda to the *pas de deux* in *The Fairy's Kiss* and the last movement of the *Capriccio*.

(As a matter of interest, it should be noted that when *A Card Game* was first performed in England at a Courtauld-Sargent concert at the Queen's Hall, London, on October 18 and 19, 1937, Stravinsky, who was conducting, authorised two repeats, which are not marked in the score: sections 99–105 [inclusive] and the first two bars of section 202.)

Shortly after the first performance of *A Card Game* in New York, he was commissioned to write a new work by a Washington music-lover, after whose estate—Dumbarton Oaks—the piece was christened. This was a Concerto in E flat major for fifteen

instruments,¹ which in layout and also, to some extent, in style recalls Bach's Brandenburg Concertos. Its composition was finished on May 8, 1938, and the first performance took place shortly afterwards at a concert of La Sérénade in Paris.

This Concerto consists of three movements, which follow each other without break: 1. *Tempo Giusto*; 2. *Allegretto*; 3. *Con moto*. Although there are occasional passages of solo writing for the individual string instruments, Stravinsky makes no attempt to form a concertino of string soloists in contrast to the *ripieni* strings, but is content to let the miniature string orchestra compete with the solo wind instruments on equal terms.

This work shows an extension of his contrapuntal style of writing. For instance, the main subject of the first movement is closely related to the common chord of E flat major; but a particularly rich texture is obtained by allowing the different parts to develop simultaneously on separate lines. Out of this elaboration, a distinctive theme begins to emerge,² and this ultimately becomes the subject of a four-part fugue.³ In the third movement, the main subject is a march, which is harmonised on straightforward lines: but, out of it, the wind gradually evolves a theme,⁴ which is treated contrapuntally and leads to a *fugato* climax where the fugal subject has four entries in five bars, the second entry being inverted.⁵

The second movement (in B flat major) is an extraordinary example of Stravinsky's aerated style. The main theme is divided and echoed between the violins, violas, and the clarinet, the accompaniment being confined to an occasional note or a fragment of an arpeggio from the bassoon or 'cellos *pizzicati*; and although during the recapitulation the flute traces an elegant counter-pattern, this does not affect the 'white page' style of the whole. *Multum in minimo*.

20

'Musical Poetics'

In 1939 Stravinsky again toured the United States as pianist and conductor, and during this visit he accepted a commission to compose a symphony to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra the following year. He had scarcely embarked

¹ Flute, clarinet, bassoon, 2 horns, 3 violins, 3 violas, 2 'cellos and 2 double-basses.

² Section 4 & *seq.*

³ Section 13.

⁴ Section 58 & *seq.*

⁵ Sections 61 and 62.

on its composition, however, when he was approached through Nadia Boulenger by the Chairman of the Harvard University Charles Eliot Norton Professorship Committee and offered the chair of poetry for the academic year 1939-40. According to the definition of Mr. Chauncey Stillman, who created the Professorship, poetry was to include not only the visual arts of painting, sculpture and architecture, from the poetic point of view, but also archaeology, literature and music. Stravinsky accepted; and it was agreed that he should live in Cambridge or Boston from October 1939 to the following May, with two months' vacation for his concert engagements.

His duties comprised the delivery of half a dozen public lectures and also regular meetings with a small group of students for informal talks about music in general and the composition of music in particular. Of these meetings, Alexis Kall writes:¹ 'This course did not comprise *instruction* in composition. Stravinsky merely criticised the works of the young composers, or would-be composers. Always outspoken as to the faults and errors in counterpoint and style, he never hesitated to point out passages that merited recognition and revealed the presence of real invention or imagination. It was a treat for his audiences, however, when, instead of criticising the compositions of others, he would take some of his own works—mostly of the latest period of his creative activity (*Oedipus Rex*, *A Card Game*, the "Dumbarton Oaks" Concerto, etc.)—and would analyse and play a whole composition on the piano. How many details of counterpoint or orchestration that one would hardly notice, how much beauty that otherwise would have been lost, were revealed to his eager listeners during these unforgettable hours !'

The lectures dealt with Musical Poetics and were entitled as follows: 1. Getting Acquainted; 2. The Phenomenon of Music; 3. Musical Composition; 4. Musical Typology; 5. The Manifestations of Russian Music; 6. Execution, followed by a brief Epilogue.

1. *Getting Acquainted*. Stravinsky starts by sketching the guiding principles of the course and makes it clear that his audience is going to hear a series of dogmatic musical confessions, illustrated from his own experience in the light of concrete musical values. He insists that these values are subject to the laws of order and discipline. Although at the time he wrote *The Rite of Spring* he was hailed in some quarters as a revolutionary, he denies the accusation. 'To tell the truth, I should be embarrassed to find a single fact in the history

¹ 'Stravinsky in the Chair of Poetry', *The Musical Quarterly*, New York, July, 1940.

of art that could be qualified as revolutionary. By its very nature, art is constructive. Revolution implies a reversal of balance—it leads to temporary chaos. If it abandons itself to chaos, its works and its existence are immediately threatened.'

2. *The Phenomenon of Music.* Music as distinct from sound depends on the capacity of integral man, armed with the resources of sensibility and intelligence, to organise and apprehend it. After touching on the distinction between metre and rhythm, Stravinsky discusses the problem of time or 'chronos'. Here he founds his arguments on the speculations of his friend, Pierre Suvchinsky, and compares the fluctuations of psychological time with the constancy of real or ontological time, reaching the conclusion that music that is allied to ontological time is generally dominated by the principle of similarity, while music that is allied to psychological time proceeds deliberately by the principle of contrast.

Turning from the phenomenon of time to that of sound, he deals with the problems raised by the current concepts of dissonance and consonance and shows that developments during the last century have led to a point where 'dissonance is no more a factor of disorder than consonance is a guarantee of security'. This means that the expression 'tonality' has lost its traditional sense; but in its place, the contemporary composer recognises the existence of 'certain poles of attraction. Tonality has become a means of orientating music towards these poles. The tonal function is completely subordinated to the attraction they exercise. Music is merely a succession of impulses that converge towards a definite point of repose'. As a result of this development, the traditional conception of harmony and tonality as based on the major-minor system has become outmoded, and many of the accepted musical terms are no longer appropriate today.

Though modality, tonality and polarity are provisional systems that have passed or will pass away, what remains constant is the predominant part played by melody, which he defines as 'cadenced song'. 'I begin to think,' says Stravinsky, after comparing the deficiency of melody which (according to him) Beethoven fought so hard to overcome, with the natural melodic profusion of Bellini, 'I begin to think, in agreement with public opinion, that melody must retain its place at the top of the hierarchy of musical elements. It is the most important of these elements, not because it is the most immediately perceptible, but because it is the dominant voice of the symphony. . . .'

3. *Musical Composition.* This and the following lecture are

perhaps the most important of the series. Stravinsky sets out from the assumption that the existence of a free speculative will is an essential prerequisite for creative work. He then claims that the next stage depends, not on inspiration, but on a kind of appetite that is brought into being by an artist's anticipation of the work to be created. This feeling of anticipation is accompanied by an intuitive though not yet intelligible comprehension of the unknown work, which can come into being only through the efforts of a discriminating technique. In his own case, he says that 'the actual process of writing a work is inseparable from the pleasure of creation'. He cannot separate the spiritual effort from the psychological effort and the physical effort: they are all equally present, valid and enjoyable. Indeed, if by any impossible chance he were to be presented with a new work of his without having actually been through the labour of creation, he would 'feel ashamed and discomfited as if by a trick'.

Passing to the part played in creation by the imagination, he emphasises the importance of a composer profiting by the unforeseen, the accident, the obstacle. If by chance his finger slips, he will notice it in order possibly to profit by it at a later stage if a suitable opportunity occurs.

Tradition, he affirms, results from conscious and deliberate acceptance of what is living in music. It is inherited on condition that fruitful use is made of it before handing it on to the next generation; and as an instance of the proper use of tradition, he cites the case of his own opera, *Mavra*.¹ This leads him to develop a formidable onslaught on the Wagnerian concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which he accuses of being directly contrary to the true stream of musical tradition; and in contrast to Wagner's pretentious music dramas, he praises the sanity of the operatic tradition as kept alive by Verdi, Gounod, Delibes, Bizet, Chabrier and Messager in the nineteenth century.

From this digression, he returns to his main argument by pointing out that Wagner's failure was mainly due to his inability to accept the arbitrary limitations of order and discipline that are essential if an artist is to achieve real freedom.²

4. *Musical Typology*. Here Stravinsky is concerned with the question of language and style. Language, he says, is an 'element common to composers of a certain school or period', and style, 'the particular way in which a composer controls his concepts while speaking the language of his profession'. The general style of any

¹ Cf. p. 103 above.

² Cf. p. 92 above.

particular period is formed by a combination of individual styles dominated by those of the great composers who, like so many blazing beacons, project their radiance and warmth far beyond their immediate neighbourhood. Thereby, the continuity of culture is assured: but continuity should not be confused with progress. Progress in the sense that the music of today is bound to be better and worthier than the music of yesterday is a complete illusion. Each of the great composers causes a profound disturbance in his neighbourhood; but, later, stability is achieved, and that is the moment when academism is born.

He then turns to analyse the state of anarchy in contemporary music and to deplore the refusal of so many artists to submit to the discipline of an established order. He reiterates the importance of recognising the existence of a hierarchy of values and moral principles and touches on the distinction between classicism and romanticism in so far as these terms imply a state of subordination or insubordination on the part of the artist.¹ His argument develops in such a way that he is able to deliver yet another onslaught on Wagner, during which he compares the neophyte who consults a guide-book like a directory containing all the various *Leitmotive* when listening to *The Twilight of the Gods*, with 'a tourist on the top of the Empire State building who tries to orient himself by unfolding a map of New York'.

Returning to the question of academism as opposed to modernism so-called, he complains that contemporary critics are apt to reject any work, which because of its clarity and order appears to them to be academic, in favour of the discordant and confused musical extravagances that they hail as modern. This attitude affects him closely. 'I myself,' he says, 'have often adopted an academic attitude without dreaming of dissimulating my pleasure in so doing—to the anger of these gentlemen. Yet my greatest critics have always done me the honour of recognising that I am fully conscious of my acts. . . . As my temperament is not academic by nature, it is through the exercise of my intelligence and will-power that I am able to use the formulas of academism. I do so just as deliberately as I might make use of folk music. These are raw materials of my art.' But at this point he refuses to be drawn further into a controversy about the nature and value of his own work. Instead, he takes a number of historical examples to show up the long list of errors committed by music critics through the ages: Scheibe on J. S. Bach; Schiller on Haydn; Spohr on Beethoven; and, finally, Grillparzer on Weber.

¹ Cf. p. 92 above.

The last example is clearly a favourite passage, for it is also quoted in Stravinsky's *Chronicle*. Writing about the production of *Euryanthe* in 1823, Grillparzer criticised it for its 'total lack of arrangement and colour. This music is horrible. This inversion of euphony, this violation of beauty would have led to the application of legal sanctions in ancient Greece. Such music is answerable to the police. It would give birth to monstrosities if it started to spread.' But composers are no more reliable in judgment than critics; and it is particularly interesting to find Weber himself a few years earlier writing as a young man of twenty-four to Nägeli, his Zurich publisher:¹ 'You seem to see me in my Quartet and Caprice as an imitator of Beethoven and, however flattering this might be to many, it is not at all pleasing to me. . . . I am too far removed in my standpoint from Beethoven to believe I could ever fall in with him. The fiery, yes, almost unbelievable invention which inspires him is accompanied by such confusion in the arrangement of his ideas that only his earlier compositions please me; the later ones, on the contrary, are to me only a disordered chaos, an incomprehensible struggle towards novelty, in the midst of which some heavenly flashes of genius show me how great he could be if he would bridle his exuberant fantasy.' This letter is all the more astonishing when one reflects that these remarks refer, not to the works of Beethoven's last period, but in all probability to the 3rd and 4th Symphonies, about which Weber had written a disparaging notice a few months previously in the *Morgenblatt*.

In any case, the implication is that Stravinsky is content to leave his work to be judged, not by the professional critics, nor even by his fellow composers, but by the public, which is generally sane and spontaneous in its reactions, and free from the taint of snobbishness.

5. *The Manifestations of Russian Music*. In order to illustrate his previous lecture, Stravinsky examines the typology of Russian music. He starts with a historical survey, which deals with Glinka, Dargomijsky, the 'Kuchka' and Chaikovsky, and explains the relative importance of folk music, plainsong, and the Italian, German and Oriental tendencies of the nineteenth century. This leads him to the conclusion that there are two Russias to be considered, a right-wing Russia and a left-wing Russia, which are subject to two disorders—the conservative and the revolutionary. 'And we shall see,' he says, 'the second disorder devour the first and feed on it to the point of indigestion.' Here he passes to Soviet music

¹ From a letter of Carl Maria von Weber's dated May 21, 1810, in the possession of Dr. Curt Sluzewski.

and deals with it in so outspoken a fashion that when the *Musical Poetics* came to be reprinted in France in 1945, it was judged expedient to omit (without explanation) the whole of this lecture and to expunge any reference to it elsewhere.

In the early years of the Revolution, Soviet musical policy was confined to a series of rudimentary vetoes. For instance, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Kitezh* was put on the index because it was considered too mystical, while Chaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* was approved on the grounds that it was a realistic opera of manners. A little later, the position was reversed, *Kitezh* being accepted as a drama of the people, while *Eugene Onegin* was rejected because it was redolent of feudalism. When new operas came to be written, attempts were made to exalt the 'mass' opera with no hero and no plot.

By 1935, however, Dmitri Shostakovich's sudden rise to fame was interrupted by a scandal of the first magnitude. His opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, based on a story by Leskov, was denounced on Stalin's direct intervention and withdrawn from the repertory. In an article that appeared in *Pravda* on January 28, 1936, it was stated: 'This music, which is based on the principle of negation of opera, similar to that governing the leftist art which denies simplicity in the theatre, denies realism, understandable imagery, natural sound of speech. . . . The composer, apparently, does not set himself the task of listening to the desires and expectations of the Soviet public. He scrambles sounds to make them interesting to formalist-esthetes, who have lost all good taste.' Stravinsky's laconic comment on the affair, 'Shostakovich's music was severely judged—perhaps not altogether wrongly', is all the more significant when it is remembered that ten years later Shostakovich's 9th Symphony called forth a similar denunciation from the music critic of *Culture and Life* (October 1, 1946), the official propagandist organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, on the grounds that it contained 'ideological impurities and deviations', and the extraordinary charge was added that this particular Symphony showed 'the unwholesome influence of Igor Stravinsky—an artist without a fatherland and without confidence in advanced ideas'!

The immediate effect of the ban on *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was a return to 'simplification' and a growing tendency to exploit folk music as in the operas of Djerzhinsky. This was carried so far that claims were made that it was high time to abandon the 'feudal, bourgeois and pretentious distinction' between popular music and intellectual music, a heresy that Stravinsky attacks with the utmost vigour.

To summarise, Stravinsky claims that there are two fundamental formulas that explain contemporary Soviet music. On the one hand, there is a secular style that is used to accompany 'members of a Kolchosa with their tractors, dancing with reasonable gaiety to the strains of a popular chorale': on the other hand, a grandiloquent and elevated style suitable for such compositions as 'Symphonies of Socialism'. Not unnaturally, he considers both formulas to be equally inadmissible.

This is a bitter and biting analysis; and Stravinsky admits as much.

In conclusion, after a passionate affirmation of his conviction that art is not and cannot be 'a superstructure established on the bases of production' as is claimed by the Marxists, he says: 'Doubtless the Russians are one of the most generously endowed people with a gift for music. . . . But art presupposes culture, education and intellectual stability; and never has Russia been more lacking in these qualities.'

6. *Execution*. Many of the arguments developed in this lecture have already appeared in Stravinsky's *Chronicle*. For instance, as soon as he starts to deal with the question of execution, he finds himself confronted by the problem of interpretation, and once again he attacks virtuoso performers—particularly virtuoso conductors—who are ready to betray both the letter and the spirit of a work, if it suits their vanity to do so. The moral of his diatribe is that anyone who aspires to the high calling of a musical interpreter must first become an impeccable executant. 'The secret of perfection is above all to be found in the full understanding of the laws imposed by the work to be performed.'

The cure for these discontents can be provided by a proper form of education—an education not only of the ear, but also of the spirit. As a typical example of bad manners, he cites the current habit of performing Bach's St. Matthew Passion with reinforced choir and orchestra, despite the fact that the work was originally written for an ensemble of about thirty-four performers, including soloists and choristers. Power is not necessarily gained by increasing the number of executants, because after a certain point the feeling of intensity becomes weaker instead of stronger and begins to blunt the senses.

At this point, Stravinsky discusses the relation between a composer and his public. Whereas towards the end of the fourth lecture he appeared content to rely on the public's good taste rather than that of the professional critics, he now reconsiders the matter in the light of the fact that any new work of musical creation must pass through the intermediate stage of execution before it can reach

the public's ear. 'In the last resort, the fate of a work doubtless depends on the taste of the public and its changing feelings and habits—in short, its preferences—but not on its judgment as if that were a sentence from which there is no appeal.'

He analyses the various ways of listening to music—the states of active and passive receptivity—and deplores the effect of broadcasting in increasing the number of people who hear without listening. 'How different from the time when J. S. Bach walked joyfully a long distance to hear Buxtehude ! Now the radio brings music to the home at every hour of the day and night and spares the listener all effort except that of turning a switch.' Though broadcasting aims at increasing the general knowledge and enjoyment of music, its effect is often to destroy the appetite it sets out to stimulate.

Epilogue. After briefly recapitulating the essential details of the previous lectures, Stravinsky speaks of the eternal esthetic problem faced by all serious artists and decides that the guiding factor is the pursuit of unity through multiplicity. Here he might well have taken for his text a sentence from the letter of Weber's quoted above:¹ 'The goal of an artistic work is to spin the whole out of a single idea so that in the most manifold way the unity shown in the first principle or theme is made evident.' In his own case, he explains that though he always looks for fresh and authentic musical sensations, he is none the less convinced that a constant search for variety alone prompts a vain and unsatisfied curiosity.

Music unifies: but unity is not necessarily monotonous or static. 'The finished work spreads in order to make itself known and eventually flows back to its origin. The cycle is then closed; and in this way music appears to us as an element of communication with the future—and with the Supreme Being.'

The Symphony in C and later Compositions

Just before Stravinsky started his lecture course at Harvard, the second World War broke out, and by the time he had finished, Germany had overrun Denmark and Norway, the Low Countries and France. Remembering the way he had been cut off from his former fatherland in the first World War and condemned to a period of financially embarrassing exile in Switzerland, he was anxious to avoid the same sort of occurrence now. He accordingly decided to

¹ Cf. p. 160 above.

settle in the United States and in December 1945, became an American citizen. His wife had died in Paris on October 18, 1939; and in March, 1940, he married Vera Sudeikin, formerly the wife of the Russian painter Serge Sudeikin, who had designed the scenery for the ballet *The Tragedy of Salome*, which was produced by the Russian Ballet in 1913 with music by Florent Schmitt.

In the summer of 1940, his first preoccupation was to complete his Symphony in C for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In view of the final words in the Epilogue to his *Musical Poetics*, it is not surprising to find that, like the Symphony of Psalms, the work bears a dual dedication, being 'composed to the glory of God and inscribed to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra'. It was performed for the first time in the United States on November 7, 1940. The first English performance was given by the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult at Bedford on November 17, 1943.

This Symphony is in four movements: I. *Moderato alla Breve*; II. *Larghetto concertante*; III. *Allegretto*; IV. *Adagio* leading to *Tempo Giusto alla Breve*. It is written for normal symphony orchestra with double woodwind, usual brass and timpani.

The motto of the Symphony—or at least of its first and last movements—is given in the opening bars, an upward surge of reiterated B's rising to C and falling to G. Out of this phrase develops the main subject (given to the oboe), a capricious theme that is closely related to similar themes in the *Capriccio* and Concerto for Two Solo Pianos.¹ A foretaste of the main theme of the last movement appears in an agitated passage (*Tempo agitato senza troppo accelerare*) just before the recapitulation, during which a considerable amount of the material of the opening exposition is literally repeated. The motto is worked into the coda, which ends with a chord of E minor superimposed on one of C major (both in the first inversion).

In the slow movement, the orchestra is reduced by the omission of trombones and tuba; and the instrumentation is carried out on chamber orchestra lines as in the 'Dumbarton Oaks' Concerto. The main theme (in F major) is entrusted to oboe and 1st violins, who start off in virtual unison, but soon break step and develop the same subject simultaneously on independent lines. The effect is one of elaboration rather than of counterpoint. Two contrasting episodes (*Doppio movimento*) in G minor and F sharp major lead to a restatement of the original theme with extra ornamentation from solo wind instruments.

¹ Cf. p. 152 above.

The *Allegretto* is a restless movement (in G major) with frequent changes of time signature, but a constant semiquaver beat. Its various episodes are punctuated by passages of *sforzando* string chords and a brief fanfare on wind and brass. The tempo of the last part of the movement is slowed up (*Meno mosso*) for a fugal *stretto*.

In the *Adagio* introduction to the last movement a sombre dialogue between the two bassoons in their low register is accompanied by quiet and slowly moving chords from the horns and trombones. The time changes to *Tempo Giusto*, and the lower strings and horns in unison give out the main theme, which is a lively tune based on the rising scale of G major and seems to have grown out of the little *Dance* in the Three Pieces for String Quartet (and the Four Studies for Orchestra). The exposition of this and other material, including references to the capricious theme of the first movement, is interrupted by a brief return (for eight bars) to the *Adagio* introduction. As in the first movement of the *Capriccio*, this is intended to mark the centre-point of the movement and serve as a kind of dorsal fin; but here it is more successful than in the *Capriccio* because of its careful preparation in the introduction and its significant transformation later in the coda. On the resumption of the *Tempo Giusto*, there is a *fugato* founded on an inversion of the main theme. The motto is heard again (as in the opening bars of the Symphony) and leads to a *fortissimo* restatement of the first part of the main theme.

The coda consists of a quasi-liturgical succession of slowly moving wind chords (derived from the *Adagio* introduction) with the flutes playing an *ostinato* based on the motto. To begin with, these chords are accompanied by ascending scale passages from the strings; but presently the strings are silent, and the solemn chordal procession continues in a way that recalls the coda to the Symphonies of Wind Instruments. The final wind chord is echoed by the muted strings.

Although in this Symphony Stravinsky makes a magnificent attempt to produce a full-scale symphonic work, it may be thought that he does not fully succeed. His particular *concertante* style of instrumentation leads to a quickening and a lightening of the orchestral texture that in many places calls not only for a chamber music standard of performance, but also chamber music conditions of reception; and so long as symphony orchestra concerts have to be given in large halls to an audience of several thousands of people, there is bound to be a considerable risk in performing such a work.

During the next few years, he had numerous opportunities of reviving his interest in jazz, which had been dormant since the early

'twenties. In 1940 he wrote a Tango for piano solo. Two years later, he was commissioned by Messrs. Ringling and Barnum and Bailey to write a Polka for the elephants' turn in a circus ballet with choreography by Balanchin. The crisp and resilient *Scherzo à la Russe*¹ was composed for the Blue Network programme and performed by the Paul Whiteman Band in 1944; and the *Ebony Concerto*, which is in three parts, was written for Woody Herman's Band Orchestra² and first performed at a charity concert of jazz music in 1945. All these works are extremely short—the longest is the *Ebony Concerto*, which takes eight minutes to perform—and Stravinsky has prepared symphonic versions of the *Circus Polka* and the *Scherzo à la Russe*.

In addition, he has written music for various revues. The *Four Norwegian Moods* of 1942, consisting of Intrada, Song, Wedding Dance and Cortège, were originally intended for a Broadway revue, but were later instrumented for medium orchestra. Their debt to Grieg is so marked that one almost wonders whether in planning them Stravinsky remembered Constant Lambert's bitter complaint some eight years previously³ that 'if tomorrow Stravinsky took to producing synthetic Grieg—and there are remoter possibilities—no doubt we should be told that it was towards the melodic freshness and harmonic charm of the Norwegian composer that Stravinsky had been aiming all his life'! The *Ballet Scenes*, a classical ballet for orchestra, were intended for Billy Rose's revue, *The Seven Lively Arts*, which ran on Broadway in 1944 and 1945; but only fragments were actually used, and the work was first performed in its entirety during the series of concerts given by the New York Philharmonic in the winter of 1945 with Stravinsky as conductor.

Other commissions of special interest led to the composition of *Ode*, an orchestral triptych consisting of Eulogy, Eclogue and Epitaph, dedicated to the memory of Natalia Kussevitsky, and *Babel*, a cantata for reciter, male chorus and orchestra, which forms part of a cycle of biblical episodes entitled *Genesis*, organised by Nathaniel Shilkret at Los Angeles in 1944, and in which six other composers (including Schönberg, Milhaud and Tansman) took part.

It should also be mentioned that early in 1944, Stravinsky made a special version of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, which was withdrawn after an initial performance in Boston, as it was discovered that under

¹ The title is identical with that of Chaikovsky's op. 1 no. 1.

² It is scored for 6 saxophones, 5 trumpets, 3 trombones, guitar, harp, piano, double-bass and percussion.

³ In *Music Ho!* (1934).

an old Massachusetts law arrangements of the American National Anthem are prohibited.

Two works of greater importance are the *Danses Concertantes* (1941-2) and the Sonata for Two Pianos (1943-4). The first is a kind of *concerto grosso* for twenty-four instrumentalists¹ somewhat on the lines of the 'Dumbarton Oaks' Concerto. Its composition was finished on January 13, 1942; and the first performance took place on February 8, 1942, with Stravinsky conducting the Janssen Symphony Orchestra in Los Angeles. The work is divided into five movements: March, *Pas d'action*, *Thème varié*, *Pas de deux*, March. The motion of the March with which the work opens and closes is based on the formula of a quaver followed by two semiquavers. The *Pas d'action* is a quick rondo; the *Thème varié* has four variations—*Allegretto*, *Scherzando*, *Andantino* and a quick 6/8 Coda; the *Pas de deux* is broken up by a number of cadenzas for solo instruments. This Concerto has been used to accompany a kind of *ballet divertissement* on the stage.

The Sonata for Two Solo Pianos, though on a much less extended scale than the Concerto of 1935, is a work of considerable interest. It has three movements—*Moderato*; Theme with four Variations; and *Allegretto*. The last two follow without break. It is a peculiarity of the last movement—and to some extent of the first—that the two-part writing for each piano is restricted in compass and to some extent overlaps. As Stravinsky is here concerned with the simultaneous exploitation of independent melodic parts of varying importance (usually four in all), the harmonic implications rarely coincide, and the use of only a restricted section of the keyboard makes it particularly difficult for the ear to follow the different parts. It is as if a sculptor were to exhibit a finished carving simultaneously with the original block from which it had been cut.

The theme of the second movement is given out in the form of a canon by inversion. The first Variation has a vamped *ostinato* accompaniment² to a three- (occasionally four-) part harmonisation of the tune; the second Variation is set out in a way that recalls the first Variation of the Concerto for Two Solo Pianos; the third is a fughetta; and the fourth, a short restatement of the theme. The *Allegretto* is in ternary form. The middle section (*Poco più mosso*) has an enchanting theme, which might have come directly out of

¹ Single woodwind, 2 horns, 1 trumpet, 1 trombone, timpani, violins, violas, cellos and double-basses.

² Note especially the subtle change from C sharp to C natural in bar 13. Is this possibly due to Stravinsky's profiting by an accidental slip of the finger as mentioned on p. 158 above?

Stravinsky's 'Russian period'; and accordingly it seems hardly surprising that a faint echo of the Symphonies of Wind Instruments should be found in the miniature three-bar bridge passage that leads back to the main subject.

Some of Stravinsky's recent activities have been partly brought about by the fact that many of his earlier works are not copyright in America. He has accordingly set to work to make a third version of *The Fire Bird* suite and to rescore *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* for reduced orchestra—with triple woodwind and brass to match.

His latest works are a Symphony in three movements, dedicated to the Philharmonic Society of New York, an *Elegy* for viola solo in memory of Alphonse Onnou of the Pro Arte Quartet, and a Mass which is not yet completed.

This Symphony was first heard in New York on January 24, 1946, and in this country when it was broadcast by the B.B.C. on December 21, 1946. It is a more robust work than its predecessor of 1940 and in some ways provides an unexpectedly comprehensive summary of several of his different aspects as a composer. Not only does it carry a stage further than the Symphony of Psalms and the Symphony in C his researches into symphonic form, but the writing for piano in the middle section of the first movement and for harp in the slow movement introduces a marginal commentary on the main business of the orchestra that closely resembles the style and subject matter of his recent concertos. Not content with this singular *rapprochement* between symphony and concerto, he has gone further and shown that it is possible to recapture much of the powerful and exasperated mood of an early work like *The Rite of Spring* and recreate it within the ordered framework of a mature and classical symphony. In fact, its main interest is that it proves, once and for all, that it is by no means impossible to reconcile the Dionysian and Apollonian elements in Stravinsky's nature.

POSTLUDE

WHAT IS the special contribution Stravinsky has made to the music of this century?

Uprooted from the country of his birth when he was just over thirty, he spent six years of exile in Switzerland, and this was followed by a long and stable period of residence in France. Hardly had he adopted French nationality (in 1934) than he was uprooted again; and a further period of exile—this time in the United States—led to another change of nationality. These upheavals in his life have inevitably left their mark on his music.

A strongly national idiom is to be found in most of his early compositions—up to and including the works he wrote in Switzerland; but after 1920 his music begins to show a conscious affiliation with the Italian and French schools. This change had an important effect on his melodic invention. Whereas the works of the so-called 'Russian period' are for the most part founded on a close approximation to the melody of Russian folk or popular music, the later works exploit the much wider melodic possibilities of the main European musical tradition. Although he has deliberately adopted what may be called an international standpoint in music, his Russian origin can never be completely forgotten and, as has been seen above, it peeps through occasionally in unexpected contexts, such as the messenger's air, *Reppereram in monte puerum Oedipoda*, in *Oedipus Rex* and the middle section of the Allegretto of the Sonata for Two Pianos.

Harmonically, his apprentice work was orthodox; but with *Petrushka* he started to explore the field of bitonality and reached a position of extreme dissonance in *The King of the Stars* and *The Rite of Spring*. The chromatic complexity of his harmonic language at that moment might possibly have led to atonality, had not his innate feeling and respect for discipline, clarity and tradition proved too strong. The compositions of the next few years showed him in full retreat from chromaticism; and the task of adapting Pergolesi's music for *Pulcinella* provided a fresh stimulus for the diatonic impulse.

Even in his most dissonant passages, he never forgets the basic tonality he has chosen—the magnetic pole which exercises its power of attraction in varying degrees over the whole musical field—and this means that key relationships play just as important a part in the

construction of his works as they did, for example, in the evolution of sonata form. To begin with, because of his connection with the Russian Ballet, a large proportion of his music was cast in the form of suites; and despite attempts by some critics, for instance, to draw a close analogy between the four tableaux of *Petrushka* and the four movements of a symphony, it is not really until the early 'twenties that the Octet, Piano Concerto and Piano Sonata show him attempting to adapt sonata form to his own personal idiom. About the same time, the air with variations makes its first appearance (in the Octet) and, a little later, the fugue (in the Symphony of Psalms).

In all these works, concision of expression is a ruling factor. He has never shown any sympathy with the sort of development that adds little or nothing to an original statement; and it will be found that even a full-scale work like *Oedipus Rex* barely exceeds an hour in performance, while a set of brief miniatures such as the *Three Japanese Lyrics* is a musical microcosm.

Without a healthy pulse, music stagnates and dies. His interest in the importance of movement in time led at first to ingeniously complicated metrical experiments, and at one time or another he seems to have exploited all the possible varieties of syncopation. During the 'Russian period', he placed almost exaggerated importance on machine-like metronomical precision; but this attitude was gradually modified and relaxed in the 'twenties, with the result that his later compositions reveal a much freer feeling for rhythm.

After showing in *The Fire Bird* that he could rival, if not excel, his master Rimsky-Korsakov in brilliance and glamour of orchestration, and after manipulating an increased orchestral contingent in *The Rite of Spring* with redoubtable virtuosity, he apparently felt a growing dissatisfaction with mass effects of scoring and the heavy coagulated texture so characteristic of romantic composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and tried, partly by experiments with various chamber orchestra combinations and partly by treating the normal symphony orchestra on chamber music lines, to avoid the blurring caused by excess of doubling and to free the instruments so that each member of the orchestral family could speak with the clear outline of an individual voice. He has found new plastic possibilities in the combination of instruments of different timbres; and some of his most striking discoveries can be traced to the experiment he carried out in *The Soldier's Tale* of treating a chamber music ensemble as a miniature orchestra.

By precept in his writings—particularly in the Harvard lectures

on Musical Poetics—and by personal example, he has asserted the dignity of the artist who embraces the principles of law and order, lucidity and restraint; and throughout his career, he has fought passionately and dogmatically for the recognition of music as an ontological art, untainted by impure emotion or extraneous non-musical considerations. At no time has he been content to rest on his laurels; but has always shown himself eager to adventure in new directions and explore fresh musical territory. It is difficult to think of any contemporary musician to whom the following description of the ideal artist, written by his old friend and collaborator, C. F. Ramuz, could more appropriately be applied:¹

'Continuer à être étonné; continuer à être neuf et jusqu'au bout devant ce qui est neuf; car tout est neuf pour qui est neuf. Ne pas céder à l'habitude, qui est usure et usure progressive: et tout devient poussiéreux et gris, tout devient pareil à ce que nous sommes, tout se ressemble et tout se répète, parce que nous nous ressemblons et nous répétons. . . . Rester "premier" en présence des choses premières; élémentaire devant l'élémentaire; être capable ainsi de toujours devenir et non pas d'être seulement: non pas immobile, mais en mouvement, au milieu de ce qui est mobile; en contact incessant avec ce qui se transforme, se transformant soi-même; livré comme l'enfant totalement à l'extérieur, mais avec ce retour à soi-même que n'a pas l'enfant, et vers un intérieur où on recueille, où on ordonne.'

It is always rash, yet tempting, to prophesy. The popular success of Stravinsky's early ballets, which was partly due to the circumstances attending their stage presentation, has to some extent diverted attention from the importance of his later compositions. There is much to admire and enjoy in works like the Octet, the *Capriccio*, the Concerto for Two Solo Pianos and the Symphony in three movements; yet it seems probable that he reaches his fullest stature when his functioning as a composer has been set in motion by some extraneous factor such as a visual idea or a text, and that works like *The Rite of Spring*, *The Wedding*, the Symphony of Psalms and *Persephone* represent the high-water mark of his invention and form one of the most precious contributions to the musical treasury of the twentieth century.

¹ *Journal* (1896-1942), published by Editions Bernard Grasset, Paris, 1945, pp. 321, 322.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF WORKS

(1)

SONATA: for piano—I. Allegro, II. Andante, III. Scherzo, IV. Finale (Samara—St. Petersburg, 1903–4). Unpublished: manuscript with Nicholas Richter.

(2)

FAUN AND SHEPHERDESS: song-cycle to poems by Pushkin for mezzo-soprano and orchestra, op. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1905–6). First performance, Concerts Belaiev, St. Petersburg, spring 1907.

(3)

SYMPHONY IN E FLAT: for orchestra, op. 1—I. Allegro moderato, II. Scherzo: Allegretto, III. Largo, IV. Finale: Allegro molto (St. Petersburg, 1905–7). First performance, Concerts Belaiev, St. Petersburg, spring 1907. (Revised version conducted by Ansermet at the Casino, Montreux, April 2, 1914.)

(4)

TWO MELODIES: of S. Gorodetsky for mezzo-soprano and piano, op. 6—1. Spring: The Cloister (Ustilug, Dec. 1907), 2. A Song of the Dew (Ustilug, 1908).

(5)

FANTASTIC SCHERZO: for orchestra, op. 3 (Ustilug, March, 1908). First performance, Concerts Siloti, St. Petersburg, 1909.

(6)

PASTORAL: wordless song for soprano and piano (Ustilug, 1908). Orchestrated for oboe, cor anglais, clarinet and bassoon at Biarritz, Dec. 1923.
Pastoral: revised version for (a) violin and piano, and (b) violin, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet and bassoon (1933).

(7)

FIREWORKS: fantasy for orchestra, op. 4 (Ustilug, 1908). First performance, Concerts Siloti, St. Petersburg, 1909.

(8)

FUNERAL DIRGE: on the death of Rimsky-Korsakov, for orchestra, op. 5 (Ustilug, 1908). First performance, Concerts Belaiev, St. Petersburg, autumn 1908. Unpublished: manuscript lost.

LIST OF WORKS

(9)

FOUR STUDIES: for piano, op. 7—1. Con moto, 2. Allegro brillante, 3. Andantino, 4. Vivo (Ustilug, June and July, 1908).

(10)

THE FIRE BIRD: ballet in two tableaux, composed after the Russian legend by M. Fokin (St. Petersburg, 1909—May 18, 1910). First performance, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, Opera House, Paris, June 25, 1910.

The Fire Bird: suite for full orchestra, 1911—I. Introduction—Kashchei's Enchanted Garden and the Fire Bird's Dance, II. Supplication of the Fire Bird, III. The Princesses' Game with the Golden Apples, IV. The Princesses' Horovod, V. Infernal Dance of all Kashchei's Subjects.

The Fire Bird: suite for medium orchestra, reorchestrated in May, 1919—I. Introduction—the Fire Bird and its Dance, II. The Princesses' Horovod, III. The Infernal Dance of King Kashchei, IV. Lullaby, V. Finale.

(11)

TWO POEMS OF VERLAINE: for baritone and piano, op. 9—1. Un Grand Sommeil Noir, 2. La Lune Blanche (La Baule, 1910).

(12)

PETRUSHKA: burlesque scenes in four tableaux by Igor Stravinsky and Alexander Benois (Clarens—Beaulieu—Rome, 1910—May 26, 1911). First performance, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, June 13, 1911.

Petrushka: three movements for piano solo—I. Russian Dance, II. In Petrushka's Cell, III. Festival Week (Anglet, 1921).

(13)

TWO POEMS OF BALMONT: for voice and piano—1. Blue Forget-me-not, 2. The Dove (Ustilug, 1911).

(14)

THE KING OF THE STARS: cantata for male choir and orchestra, poem by K. Balmont (Ustilug, 1911).

(15)

THE RITE OF SPRING: pictures of pagan Russia in two parts by Igor Stravinsky and Nicholas Roerich (Ustilug—Clarens, 1911—March 8, 1913). First performance, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, May 29, 1913.

(16)

THREE JAPANESE LYRICS: for voice, 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, piano and string quartet—1. Akahito, 2. Mazatsumi, 3. Tsaraiuki (Ustilug, 1912—Clarens, 1913).

(17)

THREE LITTLE SONGS: souvenirs of my childhood, for voice and piano—1. The Magpie, 2. The Rook, 3. Caw, Caw, Jackdaw! (Clarens, 1913).

(18)

THE NIGHTINGALE: a lyric tale in three acts by Igor Stravinsky and S. Mitusov after Hans Andersen. (The first act written at Ustilug in 1909, the last two at Clarens in 1914.) First performance, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, the Opera House, Paris, May 26, 1914.

The Song of the Nightingale: symphonic poem for orchestra, based on the last two acts of *The Nightingale* (Morges, 1917). First performance, Geneva, Dec. 6, 1919.

(19)

THREE PIECES FOR STRING QUARTET (Salvan, 1914). cf. also no. 50.

(20)

PRIBAUTKI: song games for voice, flute, oboe (cor anglais), clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola, 'cello and double-bass—1. L'oncle Armand, 2. Le Four, 3. Le Colonel, 4. Le vieux et le lièvre (Salvan, 1914). First performance, Paris, Salle Gaveau, May 1919.

(21)

THREE EASY PIECES: for piano duet (easy left hand)—1. March, 2. Waltz, 3. Polka (Clarens, 1915). cf. also no. 38.

(22)

CAT'S CRADLE SONGS: for contralto and three clarinets—1. Sur le Poêle, 2. Intérieur, 3. Dodo, 4. Ce qu'il a, le chat (Clarens—Chateau d'Oex—Morges, 1915–16).

(23)

— REYNARD: burlesque tale, to be sung and played, adapted for the stage from Russian folk stories, text and music by Igor Stravinsky (Morges, 1916–17). First performance, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, the Opera House, Paris, June 3, 1922.

(24)

THREE TALES FOR CHILDREN: for voice and piano—1. Tilimbom (Morges, 1917), 2. Les canards, les cygnes, les oies (Morges, 1917), 3. L'ours (Morges, 1915).

LIST OF WORKS

Tilimbom: revised version, lengthened from 36 to 64 bars and orchestrated at Biarritz, Dec. 1923.

(25)

FIVE EASY PIECES: for piano duet (easy right hand)—1. Andante, 2. Española, 3. Balalaika, 4. Napolitana, 5. Gallop (Morges, 1917). cf. also nos. 38 and 44.

(26)

STUDY: for pianola (Morges—Diablerets, summer, 1917). First performance, the Æolian Hall, London, Oct. 13, 1921. cf. also no. 50.

(27)

SAUCERS: four Russian peasant songs for equal voices—1. On Saints' Days in Chigisakh (1916), 2. Ovsen (1917), 3. The Pike (1914), 4. Master Portly (1915).

(28)

THE WEDDING (LES NOCES): Russian choreographic scenes in four tableaux, with song and music (begun at Salvan, July 1914; finished at Morges at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, 1917; the third and definitive attempt at orchestration carried out at Biarritz and finished at Monte Carlo on April 6, 1923). First performance, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, Théâtre de la Gaîté, Paris, June 13, 1923.

(29)

THE SOLDIER'S TALE: to be read, played and danced, in two parts, text by C. F. Ramuz (Morges, 1918). First performance, Lausanne, Sept. 28, 1918.

The Soldier's Tale: suite for clarinet, violin and piano—1. The Soldier's March, 2. The Soldier's Fiddle, 3. Little Concert, 4. Three Dances: Tango, Waltz and Ragtime, 5. The Devil's Dance.

(30)

RAGTIME: for eleven instruments (finished at Morges at 11 a.m., Nov. 11, 1918). First performance, Concerts Koussevitzky, the Opera House, Paris, May, 1925.

(31)

FOUR RUSSIAN SONGS: for voice and piano—1. Canard, 2. Chanson pour compteur, 3. Le moineau est assis, 4. Chant dissident (Morges, 1918).

(32)

- PIANO-RAG-MUSIC (Morges, June, 1919).

(33)

- THREE PIECES FOR CLARINET SOLO (Morges, 1919). First performance (soloist: Edmond Allegra), Lausanne, Nov. 8, 1919.

(34)

- PULCINELLA: ballet with songs in one tableau after the music of Pergolesi (Morges, 1919). First performance, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, May 15, 1920.

Pulcinella: suite for small orchestra—I. Sinfonia, II. Serenata, III. (a) Scherzino; (b) Allegro; (c) Andantino, IV. Tarantella, V. Toccata, VI. Gavotta con due Variazioni, VII. Duetto, VIII (a) Minuetto; (b) Finale. First performance, Paris, Dec. 1922.

Suite: after themes, fragments and pieces by Pergolesi for violin and piano—I. Introductione, II. Serenata, III. Tarantella, IV. Gavotta con due Variazioni, V. Minuetto e Finale (finished at Nice, August 24, 1925).

Suite Italienne: for violin and piano—I. Sinfonia, II. Canzona, III. Danza, IV. Gavotta con due Variazioni, V. Scherzino, VI. Moderato—Allegro vivace (1933).

(35)

- CONCERTINO: in one movement for string quartet (Carantec—Garches, 1920).

(36)

- SYMPHONIES OF WIND INSTRUMENTS: in memory of Claude Achille Debussy (Carantec—Garches, 1920). First performance, the Queen's Hall, London, June 10, 1921.

(37)

- THE FIVE FINGERS: eight very easy pieces on five notes for piano—1. Andantino, 2. Allegro, 3. Allegretto, 4. Larghetto, 5. Moderato, 6. Lento, 7. Vivo, 8. Pesante (Garches, 1921).

(38)

- SUITE (No. 2): for small orchestra—I. March, II. Waltz, III. Polka, IV. Gallop (orchestrated 1921). cf. nos. 21 and 25.

LIST OF WORKS

(39)

MAVRA: opera buffa in one act, text by Boris Kochno after a tale by Pushkin (begun at Anglet, finished at Biarritz, March, 1922; the overture written a few weeks later at Monte Carlo, Marseilles and Paris). First performance, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, the Opera House, Paris, June 3, 1922.

(40)

OCTET: for wind instruments—I. Sinfonia, II. Tema con Variazioni, III. Finale (1922–May, 1923). First performance, Concerts Koussevitzky, the Opera House, Paris, Oct. 18, 1923.

(41)

CONCERTO: for piano and wind orchestra in three movements (Biarritz, 1923–April, 1924). First performance (soloist: Igor Stravinsky), Concerts Koussevitzky, the Opera House, Paris, May 22, 1924.

(42)

SONATA: for piano in three movements (Biarritz, 1924).

(43)

SERENADE IN A: for piano in four movements—1. Hymn, 2. Romance, 3. Rondoletto, 4. Final Cadence (Nice, 1925).

(44)

SUITE No. 1: for small orchestra—I. Andante, II. Napolitana, III. Española, IV. Balalaika (orchestrated between 1917 and 1925). cf. no. 25.

(45)

PATERNOSTER: for mixed choir a capella (1926).

(46)

OEDIPUS REX: opera-oratorio in two acts after Sophocles by Igor Stravinsky and Jean Cocteau, Latin text by J. Daniélou (Nice, 1926–March 14, 1927). First performance, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt, Paris, May 30, 1927.

(47)

APOLLO MUSAGETES: ballet in two tableaux for string orchestra (Nice, July 1927–8). First performance, Library of Congress, Washington, Festival of Contemporary Music, April 29, 1928.

(48)

THE FAIRY'S KISS: allegorical ballet in four tableaux inspired by the Muse of Chaikovsky (Echarvines—Nice, 1928). First

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performance, Ballets Ida Rubinstein, the Opera House, Paris, Nov. 27, 1928.

Divertimento: suite for orchestra extracted from *The Fairy's Kiss*.

(49)

CAPRICCIO: for piano and orchestra in three movements (Nice, Jan.-Aug. 1929). First performance (soloist: Igor Stravinsky), Paris Symphony Orchestra, Salle Pleyel, Dec. 6, 1929.

(50)

FOUR STUDIES: for orchestra—1. Dance, 2. Eccentric, 3. Canticle, 4. Madrid. (Nos. 1-3 are the Three Pieces for String Quartet, cf. no. 19; no. 4 is the Study for pianola, cf. no. 26; the orchestration of the first two was begun at Morges in 1918, the orchestration of all four finished in 1929.) First performance, Berlin, Nov. 7, 1930.

(51)

SYMPHONY OF PSALMS: for chorus of mixed voices and orchestra in three movements (Jan.-Aug. 15, 1930). First performance: Société Philharmonique de Bruxelles, Palais des Beaux Arts, Dec. 13, 1930, and Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston, Dec. 19, 1930.

(52)

CONCERTO IN D: for violin and orchestra in four movements—I. Toccata, II. Aria (I), III. Aria (II), IV. Capriccio (Nice-Voreppe, spring and summer 1931). First performance (soloist: Samuel Dushkin), Berlin Funkorchester, Berlin, Oct. 23, 1931.

(53)

DUO CONCERTANTE: for violin and piano in five movements—I. Cantilena, II. Eclogue (I), III. Eclogue (II), IV. Jig, V. Dithyramb (Dec. 1931-July 15, 1932). First performance, Funkhaus, Berlin, Oct. 28, 1932.

(54)

CREDO: for mixed choir a capella (1932).

(55)

PERSEPHONE: melodrama in three parts, text by André Gide—1. The Abduction of Persephone, 2. Persephone in the Underworld, 3. The Rebirth of Persephone (May 1933-Jan. 24, 1934). First performance, Ballets Ida Rubinstein, the Opera House, Paris, April 30, 1934.

LIST OF WORKS

(56)

AVE MARIA: for mixed choir a capella (April 4, 1934).

(57)

CONCERTO: for two solo pianos in four movements—I. Con moto, II. Nocturne, III. Four Variations, IV. Prelude and Fugue (1935). First performance (soloists: Igor and Sviatoslav Stravinsky), Salle Gaveau, Paris, Nov. 21, 1935.

(58)

A CARD GAME: ballet in three deals (1936). First performance, Metropolitan Opera House, New York, April 27, 1937.

(59)

CONCERTO IN E FLAT: for chamber orchestra ('Dumbarton Oaks, 8-V-1938'). First performance, Concerts de la Sérénade, Paris, 1938.

(60)

SYMPHONY IN C: for orchestra in four movements (1940). First performance, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, November 7, 1940.

(61)

TANGO: for piano solo (1940).

(62)

DANSES CONCERTANTES: for chamber orchestra of 24 instruments—I. March, II. Pas d'Action, III. Theme Varié, IV. Pas de deux, V. March. (1941-January 13, 1942). First performance, Werner Janssen Orchestra, Los Angeles, February 8, 1942.

(63)

CIRCUS POLKA: for the elephant ballet in the Barnum and Bailey Circus (1942). First performance of the symphonic version, Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1944.

(64)

FOUR NORWEGIAN MOODS: for orchestra—I. Intrada, II. Song, III. Wedding Dance, IV. Cortège (1942). First performance, Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1944.

(65)

ODE: triptych for orchestra, dedicated to the memory of Natalia Kussevitsky—I. Eulogy, II. Eclogue, III. Epitaph (1943).

(66)

BABEL: cantata for reciter, male chorus and orchestra (1944). First performance, Werner Janssen Orchestra, Los Angeles, 1945.

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(67)

SCHERZO À LA Russe: written for the Paul Whiteman Band (1944).
First performance of the symphonic version, San Francisco
Symphony Orchestra, March, 1946.

(68)

BALLET SCENES: for orchestra, written for Billy Rose's revue *The
Seven Lively Arts* (1944). First performance of the symphonic
version, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 1945.

(69)

SONATA: for two pianos—I. Moderato, II. Theme with four varia-
tions, III. Allegretto (1943-4).

(70)

SYMPHONY IN THREE MOVEMENTS: for orchestra (1945). First
performance, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, January 24,
1946.

(71)

EBONY CONCERTO: written for Woody Herman's Band (1945).

(72)

ELEGY: for viola solo, in memory of Alphonse Onnou (1946).

In addition, Stravinsky has orchestrated the following works:

| | |
|---|------|
| <i>Kobold</i> (Grieg) for <i>Le Festin</i> | 1909 |
| Nocturne in A flat and Valse Brillante in E flat (Chopin) for <i>Les Sylphides</i> | 1909 |
| <i>The Flea</i> (melodies of Beethoven and Mussorgsky) | 1910 |
| Various numbers and the finale of <i>Khovanshchina</i> (Mus- sorgsky) | 1913 |
| Volga Boat Song | 1917 |
| Various numbers and an entr'acte of <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Chaikovsky) | 1921 |
| <i>The Star-Spangled Banner</i> | 1943 |

It is difficult to produce an accurate key to the publishers of Stravin-
sky's works, since many compositions have been transferred from
one publisher to another in the course of time, and different pub-
lishers have different agents in various parts of the world; but the
following list may be found to be useful:

Belaiev, Leipzig: no. 2.

Jurgenson, Moscow: nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14.

Edition Russe de Musique, Paris: nos. 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19,
34, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56.

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Henn, Geneva: nos. 20, 21, 22, 23, 25.

Chester, London: nos. 10, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 44.

Hansen, Copenhagen: no. 35.

Soviet State Music Publishing Co., Moscow: no. 3.

Schott, Mainz and London: nos. 5, 6, 7, 10, 27, 38, 44, 52, 57, 58, 59, 60.

Mercury Music Corporation, New York: no. 61.

Associated Music Publishers, Inc., New York: nos. 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 70.

Chappell, London: no. 69.

Charling Music Corporation, New York: no. 71.

APPENDIX B

LIST OF RECORDINGS

ALL THROUGH his career, Stravinsky has been keenly interested in the possibilities of recorded music, partly as a means of reaching a wider public and partly because he has felt that the gramophone, in particular, provides an almost ideal method of recording a composer's precise intentions with regard to speed, *nuances* and interpretation. The following list of rolls for mechanical piano and records for gramophone includes many items that are no longer in circulation today; but, even so, it is instructive to see how closely Stravinsky has identified himself with the recording of his works. Early in the 'twenties, it was his custom specially to adapt his scores for mechanical piano; and when that device began to be superseded by the gramophone, he himself conducted many of the recorded performances of his orchestral and chamber works. In 1925, when composing the *Serenade in A*, he planned it so that each movement would exactly fit one side of a gramophone record; and many of his later works show signs of a similar preoccupation in their construction.

(1) *For Mechanical Piano.*

FOUR STUDIES FOR PIANO (op. 7): Pianola T 22596 A, T 22597 B, T 22598 A, T 22599 B.

THE FIRE BIRD: an autobiographical sketch of Stravinsky's life to the year 1910, with a literary and musical analysis of *The Fire Bird* and a complete performance of it played by Stravinsky—Duo-Art D 759, 761, 763, 765, 767, 769; Pianola D 760, 762, 764, 766, 768, 770.

PETRUSHKA: Pleyela 8441/47.

THE RITE OF SPRING: Pianola T 24150/53 C.
Pleyela 8429/37.

THE SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE: Pleyela 8451/53.

THREE TALES FOR CHILDREN: Pleyela 8454.

THREE EASY PIECES FOR PIANO: Pleyela 8439.

FIVE EASY PIECES FOR PIANO: Pleyela 8440.

STUDY FOR PIANOLA: Pianola T 967 B.

THE WEDDING: Pleyela 8831/34.

FOUR RUSSIAN SONGS: Pleyela 8455.

PIANO-RAG-MUSIC: Pleyela 8438.

LIST OF RECORDINGS

PULCINELLA: Pleyela 8421/28.

CONCERTINO: Pleyela 8456.

THE FIVE FINGERS: Pleyela 8448/49.

CONCERTO FOR PIANO: the first movement, played by Stravinsky—
Duo-Art 528 G.

SONATA FOR PIANO: the first movement, played by Stravinsky—
annotated by Edwin Evans—Duo-Art D 231; Pianola D 232.

(2) For Gramophone.

PASTORAL (for violin and piano) Szigeti
(*violin*) and N. de Magaloff (*piano*) Columbia LX 307
(for violin and wind quartet) Columbia LB 15
(arranged for orchestra by Stokowski)
Philadelphia Orchestra (con. Stokowski) Victor 1998

FIREWORKS

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Berlin Philharmonic (con. Kleiber) | Telefunken SK 1205 |
| Colonne Orchestra (con. Pierné) | Polydor 20179 |
| ” ” ” | Odeon 121174 |
| ” ” ” | Odeon 123547 |

FOUR STUDIES FOR PIANO (op. 7)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Soulima Stravinsky (<i>piano</i>) | B.A.M. 27 ¹ |
| <i>Study in F sharp</i> | |
| Benno Moiseiwitsch (<i>piano</i>) | Columbia C 2998 |

THE FIRE BIRD

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Symphony Orchestra (con. Stravinsky) | Columbia L 2279/82 |
| Berlin Philharmonic (con. Fried) | Polydor B 21006/7 |
| Philadelphia Orchestra (con. Stokowski) | H.M.V. DB 2882/84 |
| Symphony Orchestra (con. Kleiber) | Odeon O 6762/63 |
| | O 6816 |

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| All American Youth Orchestra (con. Stokowski) | Columbia M 446 (American) |
|--|------------------------------|

The Princesses Play with the Golden Apples
The Infernal Dance of the Subjects of
Kashchei

| | |
|--|---------------|
| London Symphony Orchestra (con. Coates) | H.M.V. D 1510 |
|--|---------------|

Dance of the Fire Bird

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Philadelphia Orchestra (con. Stokowski) | H.M.V. D 1427 |
| <i>Lullaby</i> (for violin and piano) | |
| Milstein (<i>violin</i>) and Mittmann (<i>piano</i>) | Columbia C 17115 D |

¹ Private recording—Boite à Musique, 133 Boulevard Raspail, Paris.

STRAVINSKY: A CRITICAL SURVEY

PETRUSHKA

- Symphony Orchestra (con. Stravinsky) Columbia L 2173/75
 London Symphony Orchestra (con.
 Coates) H.M.V. D 1521/24
 Boston Symphony Orchestra (con.
 Kussevitsky) H.M.V. D 2094/96
 Philadelphia Orchestra (con. Stokowski) H.M.V. DB 3511/14
 Symphony Orchestra (con. Monteux) Grammophon W1008/11
 Symphony Orchestra (con. Pierné) Odeon 123577/78
 London Philharmonic (con. Ansermet) Decca K 1388/92

Tableaux I and II

- New York Philharmonic (con. Stravinsky) Columbia MX 177 (American)
Russian Dance and Coachmen's Dance
 Poulet Orchestra Decca F 2337
Russian Dance (for piano)
 Arrau (*piano*) Grammophon 90025
Russian Dance (for two pianos)
 Nemenoff and Luboshutz (2 *pianos*) Victor 2096
Russian Dance (for violin and piano)
 Szigeti (*violin*) and N. de Magaloff (*piano*) Columbia LB 38
 Dushkin (*violin*) and Stravinsky (*piano*) Columbia LB 15

THE RITE OF SPRING

- Symphony Orchestra (con. Stravinsky) Columbia LX 119/23
 New York Philharmonic (con. Stravinsky) Columbia M 417 (American)
 Symphony Orchestra (con. Monteux) Grammophon W 1016/19
 Philadelphia Orchestra (con. Stokowski) H.M.V. D 1919/22

THE SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE

- Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Victor V.M. 1041 (con. Goossens) (three records)
Chinese March
 London Symphony Orchestra H.M.V. D 1932 (con. Coates)

THREE PIECES FOR STRING QUARTET

- Krettlly Quartet Columbia D 15182

THREE TALES FOR CHILDREN: *Tilimbom*

- Kipnis (*bass*) and Dougherty (*piano*) Victor 15894

THE WEDDING

- Percussion Orchestra, Kate Winter, Linda Seymour, Parry Jones, Roy Henderson and Chorus (con. Stravinsky) Columbia LX 326/28

LIST OF RECORDINGS

- VOLGA BOAT SONG (arranged by Stravinsky)
 Boston Symphony Orchestra (con.
 Kussevitsky) H.M.V. DB 3813
- THE SOLDIER'S TALE
 Septet (con. Stravinsky) Columbia LFX 263/65
- RAGTIME
 Chamber Orchestra (con. Stravinsky) Columbia LX 382
- PIANO-RAG-MUSIC
 Stravinsky (*piano*) Columbia LX 382
 Marcelle Meyer (*piano*) H.M.V. D 1063
- PULCINELLA: *Suite for Orchestra*
Toccata and Gavotte
Variations I and II
 Symphony Orchestra (con. Stravinsky) Columbia LFX 289
Duetto and Minuetto
Finale
 Symphony Orchestra (con. Stravinsky) Columbia D 15126
Serenade and Scherzino (from the *Suite*
Italienne for violin and piano)
 Dushkin (*violin*) and Stravinsky (*piano*) Columbia LX 290
Suite (arranged for 'cello and piano by
 Piatigorsky)
 Florence Hooten ('cello) and Gerald
 Moore (*piano*) Decca X 263/64
- CONCERTINO
 Amar—Hindemith Quartet Polydor B 29056
- SUITE II
 Colonne Orchestra (con. Pierné) Odeon O 123667
- OCTET FOR WIND INSTRUMENTS
 Wind Octet (con. Stravinsky) Columbia LFX 287/88
- SERENADE IN A
 Stravinsky (*piano*) Columbia LF 139/40
- APOLLO MUSAGETES
 Boyd Neel String Orchestra Decca X 167/70
Pas de deux
 Boston Symphony Orchestra (con.
 Kussevitsky) H.M.V. D 2096
- THE FAIRY'S KISS: *Pas de deux*
 London Philharmonic (con. Dorati) Columbia DX 949

STRAVINSKY: A CRITICAL SURVEY

CAPRICCIO

- Walther Straram Orchestra (con. Ansermet) and Stravinsky (*piano*) Columbia LX 116/18
 Boston Symphony Orchestra (con. Kussevitsky) and Sanroma (*piano*) Victor M 685

SYMPHONY OF PSALMS

- Walther Straram Orchestra with Alexis Vlassoff Choir (con. Stravinsky) Columbia LX 147/49

VIOLIN CONCERTO

- Lamoureux Orchestra (con. Stravinsky) and Dushkin (*violin*) Polydor 566-173/75

DUO CONCERTANTE

- Dushkin (*violin*) and Stravinsky (*piano*) Columbia LB 12/13 and LX 290

A CARD GAME

- Berlin Philharmonic (con. Stravinsky) Telefunken SK 2460/62

FOUR NORWEGIAN MOODS

- New York Philharmonic (con. Stravinsky) Columbia 12371 D (American)

BALLET SCENES

- New York Philharmonic (con. Stravinsky) Columbia M 245 (American)

APPENDIX C

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(2) *Books about Stravinsky*

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PETROUCHKA: the Story of the Ballet, told by Sandy Posner. (Newman Wolsey Ltd., Leicester, 1945)

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